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* 1931 *





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17/5/1801.

THE
EXEMPLARY LIFE
OF THE PIOUS
LADY GUION,
TRANSLATED FROM
HER OWN ACCOUNT
IN THE
ORIGINAL FRENCH.

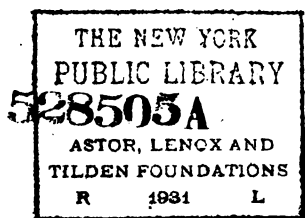
TO WHICH IS ADDED,
A NEW TRANSLATION OF HER
SHORT AND EASY METHOD OF PRAYER,
BY THOMAS DIGBY BROOKE.
WHICH TREATISE WAS THE FIRST RISE OF HER
SEVERE PERSECUTIONS.

WISDOM IS JUSTIFIED OF HER CHILDREN....MATT. XI. 19.

PHILADELPHIA:
PRINTED BY JOSEPH CRUKSHANK.

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JAN 10
1805



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YASSEL

PREFACE,

BIOGRAPHY, in all its various kinds, is the most captivating species of reading to the human mind—do but adapt the subject to the reader, and its entertainment becomes delightful, and its influence irresistible.

The secret cause of this lies deep in the heart of man—every one has some subject that he admires—some aim that he stretches after.—The life of the man who possesses in any eminent degree his revered idol, becomes to him as a precious mine,—wherein his treasure lies hid—and he searches therein with diligence, to discover by what method it was attained, and by what power secured, that he also may become partaker of his happiness, and possessor of this favourite object.

With what avidity do the young, and the thoughtless seek after novels—the amorous
and

and flighty after tales and romances—the warrior after the lives of the Cæsar's and Alexander's—the student after Newton's and Plato's—and the Christian after Saints and Holy Souls.

These demonstrate their aim by their pursuit, and give the strongest evidence of the bent of their hearts, by that reading which affords them the most entertainment and delight. A vitiated and sickly appetite can as soon relish plain and wholesome food, as a corrupted heart Pious Lives and Divine Writings.

Here then we plainly perceive the dangerous and deadly tendency of all Works of Fancy, and flighty genius.—Not to speak at all of that filthy tribe of lewd, profane, and unprofitable Stuff, that is the detestation of every man of sense, and every woman of virtue.—But those more approved Works, wherein humanity is displayed—Sentiments are sweetly refined, and even virtue itself comes forth to claim your respect and applause.—Here—too, too often—if not ever, the deluding or deluded writer, offers to your view a mixed and totally inconsistent Character, a jumble of unnatural and incompatible qualities, and sets them up as a standard of Virtue and imitation, a touchstone of truth; while the poor deceived reader—finding in himself some of the sweet and amiable natural softness, and generous disposition of the
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P R E F A C E.

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the hero he admires, imagines himself necessarily possessed of all the piety and virtue, which the author had ascribed so liberally to his patched up character,—and thus lulls himself asleep in the delusion of death.

The sacred Scriptures, indeed, give us, above all other writings, faithful and just characters of men—where, if we read of a Saint's turning Sinner, we read also of the just judgment of GOD upon his crimes, and the bitterness of his repentance.

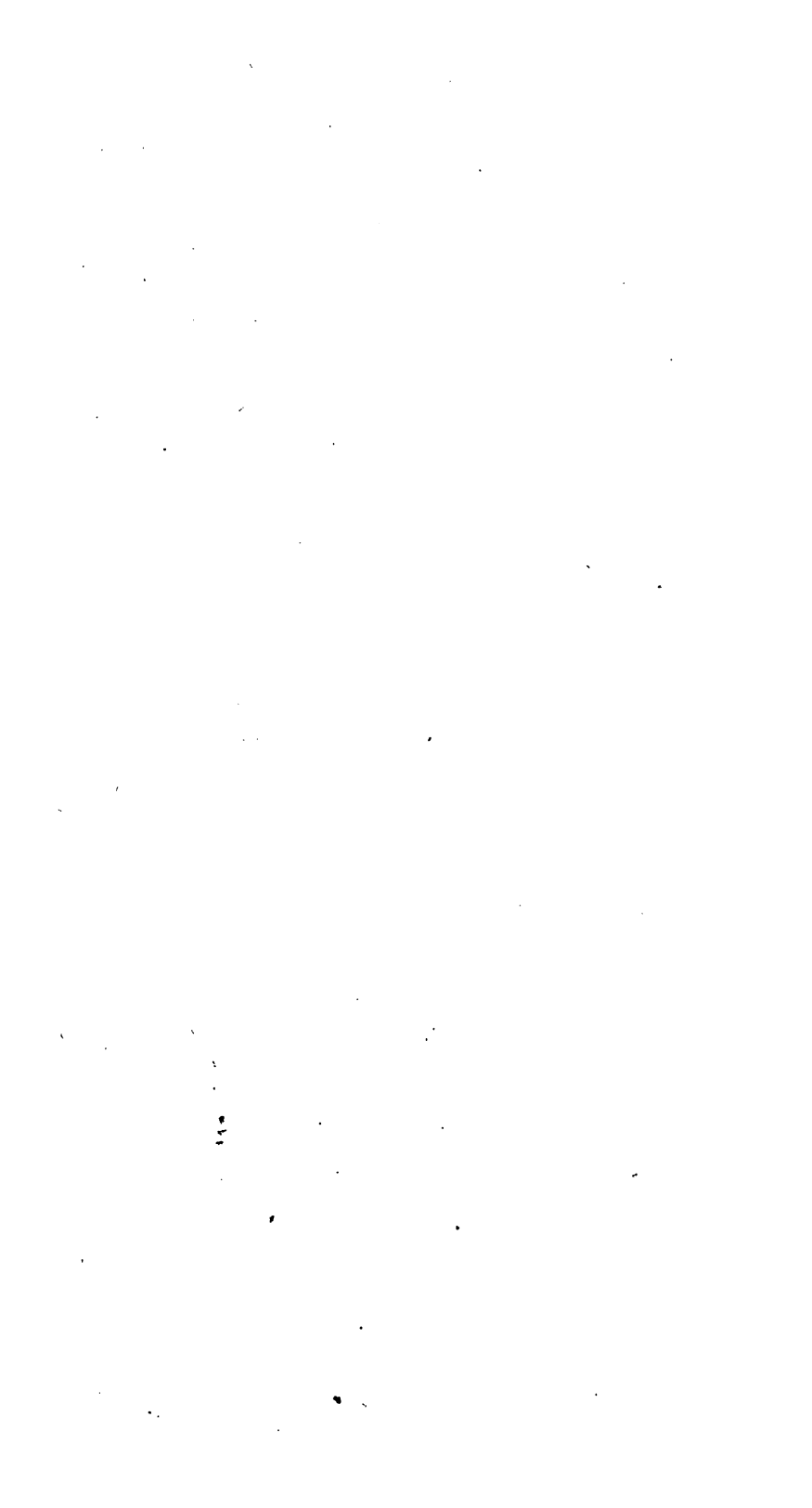
The lives of pious persons, wrote by themselves, compiled from their own papers, or related by some faithful friend, who gives us mostly their own words, and carefully collects their important sentences—these are the precious Books—the blessed treasures of inestimable worth.—Here we have not only true precept but animating example—and the Soul that thirsts after grace and salvation, has the whole process and progress, by which her fellow-traveller encountered all difficulties, escaped all dangers, and overcame all obstacles that poor pilgrims meet with in their journey *to life*.

GOD assures us, that he is no respecter of persons—but *in every Nation, he that fears him, and works righteousness, shall be accepted of him*.—Let this divine sentence be our rule and guide, so shall we not greatly err.—For those whom GOD bears with and accepts,
let

let us not dare to judge and reject.—What! poor wretched mortals as we are; shall we presume to limit and restrain that mercy, that is over all his works? or how far he shall shower out his graces and gifts upon the creatures of his Workmanship, and the redeemed of his Blood?—Shall we utterly despise and cast away all the experience and leadings of a chosen Vessel—because the product of a French soil and foreign clime—Shall we not rather glory, that lillies grow among thorns, and that the true Son of Righteousness can call up and nourish a precious Flower, amidst the weeds of a Wilderness, and the brambles of a Desert.—What, because she was born in a Romish Country, and bred a Papist, shall we exclude her from a place *among the great multitude, which no man can number, of all Nations and Kindreds and people and tongues, which stand before the Throne and before the LAMB.* (Rev. vii. 9.)

The principal advantages in the usefulness of this lady's life, above most others are—First, that the whole is recent; many, even middle aged persons, may yet remember the noise her persecutions made through Europe.—She was not secluded in a Convent—hid in a Cell—or buried in the Desert—But lived in communion and friendship with her fellow-creatures, without affecting any thing singular or extraordinary.—She had the disadvantages of title and rank, beauty
and

and fortune ; and the embarrassments of husband, children, and high relations.—Yet her soul gloriously surmounted all—and triumphed over every impediment in her spiritual race.—Be roused by her example, and encouraged by her victory—GOD is the same GOD yesterday, to-day and for ever.—What he gave her he may bestow upon thee—Go thou and do likewise.



THE LIFE
OF
LADY GUION.

PART I. CHAP. I.

BEING

THE INTRODUCTION.

ADDRESSED BY HER TO HER DIRECTOR.

AS you thought there were omissions of importance in the former narration of my wretched and uncommon Life, I willingly comply with your desire, in giving you a more circumstantial relation; tho' the labour seems rather painful, as I cannot use much study or reflection. My earnest wish is to paint in true colours to your view, the goodness of God to me, and the blackness of my own ingratitude—but this is impossible; numberless little circumstances have escaped my memory, and you are unwilling I should give you a minute account of my sins. I shall however try to leave as few faults as possible, and depend on your assurances,* of keeping it from the public, and of destroying it, when your soul hath drawn those spiritual advantages therefrom, which God intended,

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* As she advances in the work, she seems as if she thought it might be made public.

and for which purpose I am willing to sacrifice all things, being fully persuaded of his designs towards you, as well for the sanctification of others, as yourself.

BUT let me assure you, this is not attained, save thro' pain, weariness, and labour ; and a path that will wonderfully disappoint your expectations ; however, provided you be fully convinced, that it is on the NOTHING in man that God establishes his greatest works, you will be in part guarded against disappointment or surprize. It should seem, as tho' he destroyed that he might build ; for when he is about to rear his sacred temple in us, he first totally razes that vain and pompous edifice, which human art and power had erected, and from its horrible ruins, a new structure is formed, by *his* power only.

OH that you could comprehend the depth of this mystery, and conceive the secrets of the conduct of God, *revealed to Babes, but hid from the wise and great* of this world, who think themselves the Lord's counsellors, and capable of investigating his procedures, and suppose they have attained that divine wisdom *bidden from the eyes of all living*, in Self, and in their own works and *kept close from the fowls of the air* ; from those, who by a lively genius and elevated faculties mount up to heaven, and think to comprehend the height and depth and length and breadth of God.

THIS divine wisdom is unknown, even to those who pass in the world for persons extraordinary in illumination and knowledge. To whom then is she known, and who can tell us any tidings concerning her ? *Destruction and Death* assure us, that they have heard with their ears of her fame and re-
nown.

known. It is then in dying to all things, and in being truly lost to their concerns, to pass on forward into God, and exist only *in Him*, that we attain to some knowledge of the true wisdom. Oh how little are her ways known, and her dealings with her most chosen servants! Scarce do we discover any thing thereof, but surprised at the dissimilitude betwixt the truth we thus discover, and our former ideas of it, we cry out with St. Paul, *Oh the depth of the knowledge and wisdom of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out.* He judgeth not of things as men do, who call good evil and evil good, and account that as righteousness which is abominable in his sight, and which according to the Prophet, he regards no more than filthy rags. He will enter into strict judgment with these Self-righteous, and they shall, like the Pharisees, be rather subjects of his wrath, than objects of his love, or inheritors of his rewards; doth not Christ himself assure us, that “except our righteousness exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees we shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.” And which of us even approach them in righteousness: or if we live in the practise of virtues, tho’ much inferior to their’s, are we not tenfold more Ostentatious? who is not pleased to behold himself righteous in his own eyes, and in the eyes of others? or who is it doubts that such righteousness is sufficient to please God? yet we may see the indignation of our Lord, and his fore-runner manifested against such. He who was the perfect pattern of tenderness and meekness, yet such as flowed from the depth of the heart, and not that affected meekness, which under the form of a dove, hides the hawk’s heart; He appears severe only to these self-righteous, and publicly dishonoured them: in what strange colours does he represent them, while he beholds the poor sinner with
mercy,

mercy, compassion and love, and declares that for *them only* he was come, *that it was the sick who needed the physician*; and tho' the Saviour of Israel, he only *came to save the lost Sheep of the House of Israel.*

O THOU Source of Love! thou dost indeed seem so jealous of the salvation thou hast purchased, that thou dost prefer the sinner to the righteous! the poor sinner beholds himself vile and wretched, is in a manner constrained to detest himself; and finding his state so horrible, casts himself in his desperation into the arms of his Saviour, and plunges with faith into the sacred bath of his Blood, and comes forth "white as wool:" Then confounded at the review of his disordered state, and overflowing with love for him, who having alone the power, had also the compassion to save him—the excess of his love is proportioned to the enormity of his crimes; and the fulness of gratitude, to the extent of the debt remitted. Whilst the self-righteous relying on the many good works he imagines to have performed, seems to hold salvation in his own hand, and considers Heaven as a just reward of his merits. In the bitterness of zeal he exclaims against all sinners, and represents the gates of mercy as barred to them, and heaven as a place to which they have no pretensions. What need have such self-righteous of a Saviour? they are already burdened with the load of their own merits. Oh how long will they bear the flattering load, whilst sinners divested of every thing, fly rapidly on the wings of faith and love into their Saviour's arms, who freely bestows on them that which he has infinitely merited.

How full of self-love are the former, and how void of the love of God? they esteem and admire themselves in their works of righteousness, which
they

they suppose the cause of their happiness. These works are no sooner exposed to the Sun of Righteousness, than it discovers all to be so full of impurity and baseness, that it frets them to the heart; mean while the poor's inner, Magdalene is pardoned, because she loves much, and her faith and love are accepted as righteousness. The divine Paul who so well understood these great truths, and so fully investigated them, assures us *that the faith of Abraham was imputed to him for righteousness!* This is truly beautiful: for it is certain all that holy Patriarch's actions were strictly righteous; yet not seeing them as such and being void of the love of them, and divested of selfishness, his faith was founded on the salvation to come by Christ. *He hoped in him even against hope itself, and this was imputed to him for righteousness,* (Rom. iv. 18, and 22.) a pure, simple and genuine righteousness, merited by Christ, and not a righteousness wrought by himself, and regarded as of himself.

You may imagine this a digression wide of the subject I at first proposed: but it leads insensibly to it, and shews, that God accomplishes his work either in converted sinners, whose past iniquities serve as a counterpoise to their elevation; or in persons whose self-righteousness he destroys, by totally overthrowing the proud building they had reared on a sandy foundation, instead of the Rock, CHRIST.

THE establishment of all these ends, which he proposed in coming into the world, is effected by the apparent overthrow of that very structure which in reality he would erect: for by means which seem to destroy his church, he establishes it. How strangely does he found the new law and give it a sanction! the very legislator himself is condemned by the learned and great, as a malefactor, and at length

length dies an ignominious death. Oh that we fully understood how very opposite our self-righteousness is to the designs of God—it would be a subject for endless humiliation, and we should have an utter distrust in that which at present constitutes the whole of our dependance.

THIS being premised, it will be less difficult for you to conceive the designs of God, in the favours he has conferred on the most miserable of creatures. From a just love of his supreme power, and a righteous jealousy over mankind, who attribute to each other the gifts he himself bestows upon them, it pleased him to take one of the most unworthy of the Creation, to make known that his graces are the effects of his will, not the fruits of our merits ; that it is the property of his wisdom, to destroy what is proudly built, and to build what is destroyed, to make use of *weak things to confound the mighty*, and to employ in his service such as appear vile and contemptible.

THIS he does in a manner so astonishing, as to render them the objects of the scorn and contempt of the world. It is not to draw the public approbation upon them, that he makes them instrumental in the salvation of others ; but to render them the objects of their dislike, and the subjects of their insults ; as you will see in the narrative of the life, you have ordered me to write,

C H A P. II.

I WAS born the 18th of April 1648, my parents, particularly my father, was extremely pious, but to him it was in a manner hereditary, as many of his fore-fathers were Saints.

MY mother, in the 8th month was accidentally frightened, which caused an abortion, and it is generally imagined that a child born in that month cannot survive; indeed I was so excessively ill, immediately after my birth, that all about me despaired of my life, and were apprehensive I should die without baptism; but perceiving some signs of recovery they ran to acquaint my father, who immediately brought a priest; but on entering the chamber they were told, those symptoms which had raised their hopes were only expiring struggles, and that all was now over.

* IF I had then died, I should perhaps have never either known or loved my God, and this heart created only for thyself, without ever having had the blessedness of a single moment's union with thee, had been eternally banished thy sacred presence.— O thou who art the Supreme Felicity! if I now deserve thy hatred, and am hereafter a vessel prepared for perdition, yet still the consolation remains, of my having once known and loved thee: of having once sought and followed thee; and I am also consoled.

* Our author here adverts to the opinion commonly received in the Romish church; that children dying without baptism are not saved; from this error however, she takes occasion to break forth, into those refinements of sentiment, which tho' foolishness to the mere natural man, all real christians cannot but admire.

soled in my willingness, to embrace, thro' my attachment to thy Divine Justice, the eternal decree it may pronounce against me ; for I love thy justice when it deals more rigorously with me than any other. Yea ! I am so enamoured with thy Justice, and pure glory, that regardless of myself or my proper interests, I take part with thee against myself, and where thou strikest there will I strike also. And tho' I should have enjoyed the advantage of never having actually offended thee, had I died at that tender age, yet the pleasure which arises on being sacrificed to thee, thro' love ; together with the blessedness of having once loved thee, far transcends the pain I feel in having since so often displeased thee.

I HAD NO SOONER shewn signs of life again, than I again relapsed, and remained so long in an uncertain state, that it was some time before they could find a proper opportunity to baptize me, and I continued very unhealthy until I was two years and a half old, when they sent me to the *convent of the *Ursulines*, where I remained a few months.

ON my return, my mother neglected to pay due attention to my education. She was not fond of daughters, and abandoned me wholly to the care of servants ; and indeed I should have suffered severely from their inattention to me, had not thine all-watchful Providence been my protector ; for thro' the liveliness of my disposition, I met with various accidents, and frequently fell into a deep vault that held our fire-wood ; however, I always escaped unhurt.

* Children are educated in many of the French Convents as at our boarding-schools.

THE

THE Dutchess of *Montbason* came to the Convent of the Benedictines, when I was about four years old. She had a high friendship for my father, and obtained his permission that I should go to the same Convent; for she took peculiar delight in my infant sportiveness, and a certain sweetness in my external deportment, with which God had endowed me: I accordingly became her constant companion.

I FELL into frequent and dangerous disorders in this house, and remember to have committed considerable faults. I here had good examples before me, and being naturally well inclined I quickly followed them, when there were none to turn me aside. I loved to hear God spoken of, to be at church, and dressed in a religious habit. One day I was told of the terrors of hell, which I imagined was merely to intimidate me, as I was exceedingly lively, and full of a little petulant vivacity, which they called wit; the succeeding night I dreamt of hell, and tho' I was so young, yet time has never since been able to efface the frightful ideas, which were then impressed upon my imagination: All appeared horrible darkness, where souls were punished, and my place amongst them was pointed out. At this I wept bitterly, and cried, *Oh my God, if thou wilt have mercy upon me, and spare me yet a little longer, I will never more offend thee*—And thou didst, O Lord, in mercy hearken unto my cry, and pour upon me strength and courage to serve thee, in an uncommon manner for one of my age. I wanted to go privately to confession, but being so little, the mistress of the boarders carried me to the priest, and stayed with me while I was heard singly; but she was much astonished when I came to mention, that I had had suggestions against the faith, and the confessor began to laugh, and enquire
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what they were. I told him that till then I had doubted there was such a place as hell, and supposed my mistress had spoken of it merely to make me good, but that now my doubts were all removed. After confession my heart glowed with a kind of fervour, and at one time I felt a desire to suffer martyrdom. The good girls of the house, to amuse themselves, and see how far this growing fervour would carry me, desired I should prepare. I found great fervency and delight in prayer on this occasion, and was persuaded that this ardour, which was as new as it was pleasing, was a proof of God's love; and this inspired me with such courage and resolution, that I earnestly besought them to proceed, that I might thereby enter into thy sacred presence. But was there not latent hypocrisy here? did I not imagine that it was possible they would not kill me, and that I should have the merit of martyrdom without suffering it. Indeed it appeared there was something of this nature in it; for being placed kneeling on a cloth spread for the purpose, and seeing behind me a large sword lifted up, which they had prepared to try how far my ardour would carry me. I cried, hold! it is not right I should die without first obtaining my father's permission. I was quickly upbraided with having said this that I might escape, and that I was no longer a martyr. I continued long disconsolate, and would receive no comfort; something inwardly reprov'd me, for not having embraced that opportunity of going to heaven, when it rested altogether on my own choice.

At my own solicitation, and on account of my falling so frequently sick, I was at length taken home; but not without having met a variety of little crosses, proportioned to my age. On my return, my mother having a maid in whom she placed

placed a confidence, left me again to the care of servants. I must here mention a great fault, of which mothers are guilty, when under pretext of external devotions or other engagements, they suffer their daughters to be absent from them : nor can I forbear condemning, that unjust partiality with which parents treat some of their children ; it is frequently productive of divisions in families, and even the ruin of some ; whereas impartiality, by uniting children's hearts together, lays the foundation of lasting harmony and unanimity.

I WOULD I were able to convince parents, and all who have the care of youth, of the great attention they require, and how dangerous it is to let them be for any length of time from under their own eye, or to suffer them to be without some kind of employment. This negligence is the ruin of almost all females.—How many little Angels would we see, did not idleness and want of due restraint destroy every seed of virtue ?

How greatly it is to be lamented, that mothers who are inclined to piety, should pervert the means of salvation into their destruction, and commit the greatest irregularities in pursuing that which should produce the most regular and circumspect conduct.

THUS because they experience certain sweetnesses in prayer, they would be all day long at church ; mean while their children are running to destruction at home : the means to glorify God most is to prevent what may offend him. What must be the nature of that sacrifice which is the occasion of sin.—God should be served in his own way, not in ours. Let the devotion of mothers be so regulated as to prevent their daughters from straying :

straying : they should treat them as sisters, not as slaves, and appear pleased with their little amusements ;—thus the children will delight in the presence of their mothers instead of avoiding it ; for if they find so much happiness with them, they will not dream of seeking any elsewhere. But mothers frequently deny their children any liberties ; therefore like birds constantly confined to a cage, they no sooner find means to escape than off they go, and never more return ; whereas in order to render them tame and docile when young, they should be permitted sometimes to take wing ; but as their flight is weak, and closely watched, it is easy to retake them when they escape ; and this little flight gives them the habit of naturally returning to their cage, which becomes an agreeable confinement. I believe young girls should be treated in a manner something similar to this ; mothers should indulge them in an innocent liberty, but never lose sight of them.

To guard the tender minds of children from what is wrong, much care should be taken to employ them in agreeable and useful matters ; they should not be loaded with food they cannot relish ; milk suited to babes should be administered to them, and not strong meat, which may so disgust them, that when they arrive at an age wherein it would be proper nourishment, they will not so much as taste it. Every day they should be obliged to read a little in some good book, and spend some time in prayer, which must be suited rather to stir the affections than for meditation. Oh were this method of education pursued, how speedily would all disorder cease ! these daughters becoming mothers, would educate their children as they themselves had been educated.

PARENTS should also avoid shewing the smallest partiality in the treatment of their children ; it begets a secret jealousy and hatred amongst them, which frequently augments with time, and even continues until death. How often do we see some children the idols of the house, behaving like absolute tyrants, and treating their brothers and sisters as so many slaves, according to the example of father and mother ; and it happens many times, that the favourite proves a scourge to the parents, and the poor despised and hated one, becomes at length their whole consolation and support.

My mother was very defective in the education of her children : She suffered me whole days from her presence, in company with the servants, whose conversation and example were particularly hurtful to one of my docile disposition. My mother's heart seemed wholly centered in my brother ; so that I was scarcely ever favoured with the smallest instance of her tenderness or affection. I therefore voluntarily absented myself from her : it is true, my brother was more amiable than I, but the excess of her fondness for him, made her blind even to my outward good qualities, and served only to discover my faults, which would have been but trifling had proper care been taken of me.

CHAP. III.

MY Father, who loved me tenderly, seeing how little my education was attended to, sent me to a convent of the *Ursulines*. I was then near seven years old ; in this house were two half sisters of mine, the one by my father, the other by my mother. My Father placed me under his daughter's care, whom I may affirm to be a person of the greatest capacity, and most exalted piety, and excellently qualified for the instruction of youth. This was a singular dispensation, Oh my Lord ! of thy providence and love towards me, and proved the first means of my salvation. She loved me tenderly, and her affection made her discover in me many amiable qualities, which thou of thy great goodness hadst implanted in me : She endeavoured to improve these good qualities, and I believe that had I continued in such careful hands, I should have acquired as many virtuous habits, as I had afterwards contracted evil ones.

THIS good sister employed her time in instructing me in piety, and in such branches of learning as were suitable to my age and capacity. She had good talents, and improved them well, was frequent in prayer, and her faith as great and as pure as most. She denied herself every other satisfaction, to be with me, and to instruct me : Nay such was her affection for me, that it made her find, as she told me, more pleasure with me than any where else.

IF I made her agreeable answers, more from chance than judgment, she thought herself well paid for all her labour. In short, under her care
I soon

I soon became mistress of most things suitable for me, insomuch that many grown persons, of rank and figure, could not have answered to the things which I did.

As my father often sent for me home to see me, one time I found the Queen of *England* there. I was then near eight years of age. My father told the Queen's confessor, that if he wanted a little amusement, he might entertain himself with me, and propound some questions to me. He tried me with several very difficult ones, to which I returned such pertinent answers, that he carried me to the Queen, and said to her, "Your Majesty must have some diversion with this child." She also tried me; and was so well pleased with my lively answers, and my manners, that she demanded me of my father with no small importunity, assuring him that she would take particular care of me, designing me for maid of honour to the princess. But my father resisted so far as to disoblige her. Doubtless it was God who caused his refusal, and thereby turned off the stroke which might have probably intercepted my salvation: For being so weak as I was, how should I have withstood the temptations, and distractions of a court.

I went back to the *Ursulines*, where my good sister continued her affection. But as she was not the mistress of the boarders, and as I was obliged sometimes to go along with them, I contracted bad habits; I became addicted to lying, peevishness and indevotion, passing whole days without thinking on God; tho' he watched continually over me, as the sequel will manifest. I did not remain long under the power of such vicious habits; for my sister's care recovered me. I loved much to hear of God, was not weary of church, loved to pray, had tenderness for the poor, and a
natural

natural dislike for persons whose doctrine was judged unsound ; having sucked in, with my milk, the purity of the faith : And God has always continued to me that grace, in the midst of my greatest infidelities.

THERE was at the end of the garden a little chapel dedicated to the child JESUS. To which I betook myself for devotion ; and, for some time, carrying my breakfast thither every morning, hid it all behind his image ; for I was so much a child, that I thought I made a considerable sacrifice in depriving myself of it. Being also delicate in my choice of food, I wished to mortify myself ; but found self-love still too prevalent, to submit to such mortification. After this, when they were cleaning out this chapel, they found behind the image what I had left there, and presently guessed that it was I, as they had seen me every day going thither : And God, who lets nothing pass without a recompence, soon rewarded me with interest for this little infantine devotion.

I CONTINUED some time longer with my sister, where I retained the love and fear of God. My life was easy ; I was educated agreeably with her. I improved much in the time I had my health ; for very often was I sick, and seized with maladies as sudden as uncommon : In the evening well, and in the morning swelled and full of blueish marks, symptoms of a fever which soon followed. At nine years of age, I was taken with so violent a fit of throwing up blood, that they thought I was going to die : I was rendered exceedingly weak thereby.

A LITTLE before this severe fit, my other sister became jealous, wanting to have me in her turn. Tho' she led a good life, yet she had not a talent
for

for the education of children. I may say, that was the period of my happiness in this house. At first she caressed me much ; but all her caresses made no impression on my heart. My other sister did more with a look, than she with either caresses or threatenings. As she saw that I loved her not so well as the other, she changed her fondling to rigorous treatment. She would not allow me to speak to my other sister ; and when she knew I had spoke to her, she got me whipt, or else beat me herself. I could no longer hold out against such severe usage, and therefore requited with ingratitude all the favours of my paternal sister, going no more to see her : Which yet did not hinder her from giving me marks of her usual goodness, in the great malady I mentioned above. She kindly construed my ingratitude to be rather owing to my fear of chastisement, than to a bad heart. Indeed I believe this was the only instance in which fear of chastisement operated so very powerfully upon me, for from that time I was naturally led to suffer more in occasioning pain to one I loved, than in suffering myself at their hand. Thou knowest, Oh my Beloved ! that it was not the dread of thy chastisements that sunk deep, either on my understanding or my heart ; it was the sorrow for offending thee, which ever constituted the whole of my distress, and it was such that I imagine, tho' there were neither heaven or hell, I should always have retained the same fear of displeasing thee. Thou knowest that after my faults, when in forgiving mercy thou wert pleased to visit my soul, thy caresses were a thousand fold more insupportable than thy rod.

My father being informed of all that passed, took me home again. I was at that time near ten years of age. I stayed only a little while at home ;

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for a nun of the order of St. *Dominic*, of a great family, and one of my father's intimate friends, solicited him to place me in her convent, of which she was the prioress, promising she would take care of me herself, and make me lodge in her own chamber; for this lady had conceived a great affection for me. But she was so much taken up with her community, in which many troublesome affairs fell out, that she was not at liberty to take much care of me. Here I had the chicken-pox, which made me keep my bed three weeks, in which I had very bad attendance, tho' my father and mother thought I was under excellent care. The ladies of the house had such a dread of the small-pox, as they imagined mine to be, that they durst not come near me. I passed almost all the time without seeing any body, but a lay-sister, who only brought me my allowance of diet at the set hours, and then immediately went off again. I providentially found a bible in my chamber, and having both a fondness for reading and a happy memory, I spent whole days in reading it from morning to night, and learned entirely the historical part. Yet I was really very unhappy in this house: For the other boarders, being big girls, plagued me with very grievous persecutions. I was so much neglected, as to meat and drink, that I fell away, and became quite emaciated. Several other crosses I had, which were hard enough for me to bear.

C H A P. IV.

AFTER having been here about eight months, my father took me home again. My mother kept me more with her, beginning now to have a higher regard for me than before; yet she still preferred my brother, which was so visible, that every one spoke of it with dislike; for when I was sick, and met with any thing I liked, he demanded it; it was then taken from me, and given to him, tho' he was perfectly well in health. He was continually giving me new vexations. One day he made me mount upon the top of the coach; when he had done that, he threw me down on the ground; and by the fall I was bruised. At other times he beat me: But whatever he did, however wrong, was winked at, or had the most favourable construction put upon it. This conduct soured my temper: I had little disposition to do good, saying, "I was never the better for it." It was not then for thee alone, oh God, that I did good; since I ceased to do it, when it met not with such a reception from others as I wanted. Had I known how to make a right use of this thy crucifying conduct towards me, I should have made a good progress. Far from turning me out of the way, it would have made me turn more wholly to thee. With jealous eyes I looked on my brother, seeing the wide difference made betwixt him and me. Whatever he did, he always did well; but the blame of all fell on me. My sisters by the mother made their court to her, by caressing him, and falling foul on me. It is true, I was bad: I was relapsed into my former faults of lying and peevishness. With all these faults, I was very tender and charitable to the poor, prayed to God assiduously,

ously, loved to hear any speak of him, and to read good books.

I MAKE no doubt, sir, that you will be amazed at such a series of inconsistencies : but what succeeds, will surprize you yet more, when you see this manner of acting gain ground with my years, and that as my reason ripened it was so far from correcting such irrational conduct, that sin grew more powerful in me. O my God, thy grace seemed to be redoubled in proportion to the increase of my ingratitude. It was with me as with a city beseged, thou didst surround my heart, and I only studied how to defend myself against thine attacks, I raised fortifications about the wretched place, adding every day to the number of mine iniquities, to prevent thy taking it. And when there was an appearance of thy becoming victorious, over this ungrateful heart, I raised a counter-battery, and threw up ramparts to keep off thy goodness, and to hinder the course of thy grace : none other could have conquered than thyself. Oh my Divine Love ! whose sacred fire, was stronger than that state of death, into which sin had so often reduced me.

I CANNOT bear to hear it said, “ We are not free “ to resist grace.” I have made too long and fatal an experience of my liberty. I closed up all the avenues of my heart, that I might not so much as hear that secret voice of God, which was calling me to himself. I have indeed, from my tenderest youth, passed thro’ a series of grievances, either by maladies or by persecutions. The girl to whose care my mother left me, in dressing my head used to beat me, and did not make me turn it but with rage and blows. Every thing seemed in concert to punish me, but this instead of making me turn
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unto thee, Oh my God ! only served to afflict and embitter my mind. My father knew nothing of all this ; for his love to me was such that he would not have suffered it. I loved him much, but at the same time I feared him, so that I told him nothing of it. My mother was often teasing him with complaints of me, to which he made no other reply than, " There are twelve hours in the day ; " she'll grow wiser." This rigorous proceeding was not the worst for my soul, tho' it soured my temper, which was otherwise very mild and easy. But what caused my greatest hurt was, that not being able to endure those who treated me ill, I chose to be among those who caressed me, in order to corrupt and spoil me.

My father, seeing I was now grown pretty tall, placed me in Lent among the *Ursulines*, to receive my first communion at *Easter*, at which time I was to complete my eleventh year. And here my most dear sister under whose inspection my father placed me, redoubled her cares, to cause me to make the best preparation possible for this act of devotion. I thought now of giving myself to God in good earnest. I often felt a combat between my good inclinations and my bad habits. I even did some penances. As I was almost always with my sister, and as the boarders in her class, which was the first, were very reasonable and civil, I became such also, while among them. It had been murder to educate me badly ; for my very nature was strongly disposed to goodness, and I loved every thing that tended thereto. Easily won with mildness, I did with pleasure whatever my good sister desired. At length *Easter* arrived, and I received the communion (which was preceded by a general confession) with much joy and devotion. And in
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this house I stayed till *Whitsuntide*. But as my other sister was mistress of the second class, she demanded me in her week, to be with her in that class. Her manners, so opposite to the other's, made me relax my former piety. I felt no more that new and delightful ardour which had seized my heart at my first communion. Alas! it held but a short time; for my faults and failings were soon reiterated, and drew me off from the care and duties of religion.

As I now grew very tall for my age, and more to my mother's liking than before, she took care to deck and dress me out, to make me see company, and to take me abroad with her. She took an inordinate pride in that beauty with which God had formed me, only to bless and praise him, which was however perverted by me into a source of pride and vanity. Several suitors offered to me. But as I was not yet twelve years of age, my father would not listen to any proposals. I loved reading much, and shut myself up alone every day to read without interruption.

WHAT proved effectual to gain me over entirely to God, at least for a time, was that a nephew of my father's passed by our house, going on a mission to *Cochinchina*. I happened at that time to be gone a walking with my companions, which I seldom did. At my return he was gone. They gave me an account of his sanctity, and the things he had said. I was so touched therewith, that I was overcome with sorrow. I cried all the rest of the day and of the night. Early in the morning, I went in great distress to seek my confessor. I said to him, "What my father, am I the only person in our family to be lost? Alas! help me in my salvation." He was greatly surprized to see me so much

much afflicted, and comforted me in the best manner he could, not thinking me so bad as I was ; for in the midst of my backslidings I was docile, punctual in obedience, careful to confess often ; and since I went to him my life was more regular. Oh thou God of love, how often hast thou knocked at the door of my heart ! how often terrified me with appearances of sudden death ! Yet all these only made a transient impression. I presently returned again to my infidelities ; but this time thou didst take, and I may say quite carried off my heart. Alas, what grief I now sustained for having displeased thee ! what regrets, what exclamations, what sobbings ! Who would have thought, to see me, but that my conversion would have lasted as long as my life ? Why didst thou not, Oh my God, utterly take this heart to thyself, when I gave it to thee so fully ; or if thou didst take it then, oh why didst thou let it revolt again afterward ? Thou wast surely strong enough to hold it, but thou would'st perhaps, in leaving me to myself display thy mercy, that the depth of my iniquity might serve as a trophy to thy goodness.

I immediately applied myself to every part of my duty. I made a general confession with great compunction of heart. I frankly confessed all that I knew with torrents of tears. I became so changed that I was scarce to be known. I would not for ever so much have made the least voluntary slip ; and they found not any matter for absolution when I confessed. I discovered the very smallest faults : And God did me the favour to enable me to conquer myself in many things. There were left only some remains of passion, which gave me some trouble to conquer : But as soon as I had by means thereof, given any displeasure, even to the domestics, I begged their pardon, in order to subdue
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at the same time, my wrath and pride ; for *wrath* is the daughter of *pride*. A person truly humbled suffers not any thing to put him in a rage. As it is pride which dies the last in the soul, so it is passion which is last destroyed in the outward conduct. A soul thoroughly annihilated, or dead to itself, finds nothing of rage left.

THERE are persons who, being very much filled with the unction of grace, and with a tranquil peace, at their entrance of the resigned path of light and love, think they are come thus far : But they are greatly mistaken. This they will readily discover, if they are heartily willing to examine two things ; first if their nature is lively, warm and violent, (for I speak not of stupid tempers) they will find, from time to time, that they make slips, in which trouble and emotion have some share ; and which even then are useful to humble and annihilate them. (But when annihilation is perfected all passion is gone, for it is incompatible with the state.) Moreover they will find that there often rises in them certain motions of anger, but the sweetness of grace holds them back by a secret violence : They would *easily transgress*, if in any wise they gave way to these motions : There are persons who think themselves very mild, because nothing thwarts them : It is not of such that I am speaking ; for the mildness, which has never been put to the proof, is often only counterfeit. Those persons who, when unmolested appeared Saints, are no sooner exercised by vexing occurrences, than there starts up in them a strange number of faults, which they had thought to be dead ; and which only lay dormant, because nothing awaked them.

I FOLLOWED my religious exercises. I shut myself up all the day to read and to pray. I gave all I had to the poor, taking even linen to their houses to make them necessaries. I taught them the catechism; and, when my parents dined abroad, I made them eat with me, and served them with great respect. I read the works of *St. Francis de Sales* and the life of *Madam de Chantal*. There I first learnt what mental prayer was, and I besought my confessor to teach me that kind of prayer, but as he did not, I used my own endeavours to practise it tho' without success, as I then thought, because I could not exercise the imagination; and persuaded myself, that that prayer could not be made without forming to one's self certain ideas and reasoning much. This difficulty gave me no small trouble, and that for a long time. I was nevertheless very assiduous therein, and prayed earnestly to God to give me the gift of prayer. All that I saw writ in the life of *M. de Chantal* charmed me; and I was so mere a child, that I thought I ought to do every thing that I saw in it. All the vows she had made I made also, as that of ever aiming at the highest perfection, and of doing the will of God in every thing. One day as I was reading that she had put the name of JESUS on her heart, to follow the counsel of the spouse "Set me as a seal upon thy heart," and that for this purpose, she had taken a red hot iron, whereupon the holy name was engraven, I was very much afflicted that I could not do the same. I took it in my head to write that sacred and adorable name, in large characters, on a piece of paper. With ribbands and a big needle I fastened it to my skin in four places; and in that position continued a long time.

AFTER this, I turned all my thoughts to become a nun, very often going to *the visitation*; for the love

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which I had for St. *Francis de Sales* did not permit me to think of any other community than this of which he was the founder. I frequently went to beg the nuns there to receive me into their convent. Often I stole out of my father's house to go thither and repeatedly solicited them to consent to my admission. But, tho' it was what they eagerly desired, even as a temporal advantage ; yet they never durst let me enter their house, as they very much feared my father, whose fondness for me they were no strangers to. There was then at that house a niece of my father's, to whom I am under great obligations. Fortune had not been very favourable to her father, and had thereby reduced her in some sort to depend on mine, to whom she discovered my inclination ; who, tho' he would not for any thing in the world have hindered a right vocation, yet could not hear of my design without shedding tears. But as he happened at this time to be abroad, my cousin went to my confessor, to desire him to forbid my going to *the visitation*. He durst not however do it plainly, for fear of drawing on himself the resentment of that community ; for they already looked on me as their's. Yet I still wanted to be a nun, and importuned my mother excessively to take me to that house ; but she would not do it, for fear of grieving my father, who was yet absent, and she still referred me to his return. As I saw that I could not obtain from her what I desired, I counterfeited her hand writing, and forged a letter in which she besought those ladies to receive me ; excusing herself from coming with me on account of her illness. : But the prioress, who was a relation of my mother's, and well acquainted with her hand, at once detected the forgery.

C H A P. V.

N O sooner was my father returned home, than he fell into a violent distemper. My mother was at the same time indisposed in another part of the house. I was then all alone with him, ready to render him every kind of service I was capable of, and to give him all the dutiful marks of a most sincere affection : And I don't doubt but my assiduity was very agreeable to him. I went, unperceived by him, to empty his basons ; taking the time for it when the servants were not at hand ; as well to mortify myself as to pay due honour to what JESUS CHRIST said, that *he came not to be ministered to, but to minister*. When he made me read by him, I read with such heart-felt devotion that he was surprised at it. I remembered the instructions my sister had given me, and the ejaculatory prayers and praises I had learned from her. She had taught me to praise thee, oh my GOD, in all thy works. All that I saw called upon me to render thee that homage. If it rained, I wished every drop to be changed into love and praises. My heart was nourished insensibly with thy love ; and my spirit was incessantly engrossed with the remembrance of thee. I seemed to join and partake in all the good that was done in the world, and could have wished to have the united hearts of all men to love thee. This habit rooted itself so strongly in me, that I retained it throughout my greatest wanderings.

My cousin aforementioned helped not a little, to support me in these good sentiments : For I was often with her, and loved her, as she took great care of me, and treated me with much gentleness. Her
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fortune being equal neither to her birth, nor her virtue, she did with charity and affection what her condition obliged her to. My mother grew jealous, fearing I should love my cousin too well, and herself too little. She who had left me in my young years to the care of her maids, and since that to my own, only enquiring if I was in the house, and troubling herself no further, now required me always to stay with her, and never suffered me to be with my cousin, but with very great reluctance. My cousin fell ill; she took that occasion to send her home, which was a severe stroke to my heart, as well as to that grace which began to dawn in me.

Tho' my mother acted thus she was a very virtuous woman. But God permitted it for my exercise. She was one of the most charitable women of her age. She not only gave away the surplus, but even the necessities of the house. Never were the needy neglected by her. Never any wretch came to her without succour. She furnished poor mechanics wherewith to carry on their work, and needy tradesmen wherewith to supply their shops. From her I think I inherited my charity and love for the poor: For God favoured me with the blessing of being her successor in that holy exercise. There was not one in the town, or its environs, who did not praise her for this great virtue. She has sometimes given to the last pistole in the house, tho' she had so large a family to maintain, and yet did not fail in her faith.

My mother's only care about me, had been all along to have me in the house; which indeed is one material point for a girl. And this habit, of being so constantly kept within, proved of great service to me after my marriage, as I shall tell in its due course. It would have been better had she kept

kept me more in her own apartment, with an agreeable freedom ; and enquired oftner what part of the house I was in.

AFTER my cousin left me I continued for some time in those sentiments of piety I have mentioned. And GOD granted me the grace to forgive injuries with such readiness, that my confessor was surprised ; as he knew that some young ladies had, out of envy, traduced me ; and that I spoke well of them as occasion offered. I was seized with a tertian ague, which lasted four months, in which I suffered much ; yet during the time, was enabled to suffer with much resignation and patience. In this frame of mind and manner of life I persevered, so long as I continued the practice of mental prayer.

NEAR a twelvemonth after, we went to pass some days in the country. My father took along with us one of his relations, a very accomplished young gentleman. He had a great desire to marry me ; but my father, who had resolved not to give me to any near kinsman, on account of the difficulty of obtaining dispensations, put him off, without alledging any false or frivolous reasons for it. As this young gentleman was very devout, and every day said the office of the Virgin, I said it with him ; and to have time for it, left off prayer, which was to me the first inlet of evils. Yet I kept up for a long time, some share of the spirit of piety ; for I went to seek out the little shepherdesses, to instruct them in their religious duties ; yet this spirit gradually decayed, not being nourished by prayer. Hereby I became cold toward GOD : All my old faults revived ; to which I added an excessive vanity. The love I began to have for myself, extinguished what remained in me of the love of God.

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I DID not wholly leave off mental prayer, without asking my confessor's leave ; I told him I thought it better to say the office of the virgin every day, than to practise prayer ; as I had not time for both. I saw not that this was a stratagem of the enemy to draw me from God, and to entangle me insensibly in the snares he had laid for me ; in truth I had time sufficient for both, as I had no other occupations than what I prescribed to myself. My confessor was easy in the matter ; not being a man of prayer, he gave his consent, to my great hurt.

OH my God, if the value of prayer were but known, the great advantage which accrues to the soul from conversing with thee, and what consequence it is of to salvation, every one would be assiduous in it. It is a strong hold into which the enemy cannot enter. He may attack it, besiege it, make a noise about its walls ; but while we are faithful, and hold our station he cannot hurt us. It is alike requisite to dictate to children the necessity of prayer as of their salvation ; but alas ! unhappily, it is thought sufficient to tell them that there is a heaven and a hell ; that they must endeavour to avoid the latter and attain the former ; and yet they are not taught the shortest and easiest way of arriving at it. The only way to heaven is prayer ; a prayer of the heart, which every one is capable of, and not of reasonings which are the fruits of study, or exercise of the imagination, which, in filling the mind with wandering objects, rarely settle it ; and instead of warming the heart with love to God, leave it cold and languishing. Let the poor come, let the ignorant and carnal come, let the children without reason and knowledge, let the dull or hard hearts which can retain nothing come to
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the practice of prayer, and they shall become wise. Oh ye great, wise and rich, Have ye not a heart capable of loving what is proper for you, and of hating what is destructive? Love the sovereign good, hate all evil, and ye will be truly wise. When ye love any one, is it because ye know the reasons of love and its definitions? No, certainly; Ye love because your heart is formed to love what it finds amiable. And surely ye cannot but know that there is nought lovely in the universe but God: Know ye not that he has created you, that he has died for you: But if these reasons are not sufficient which of you has not some necessity, some trouble, or some misfortune? Which of you does not know how to tell his malady, and beg relief? Come then to this Fountain of all Good, without complaining to weak and impotent creatures, who cannot help you; come to prayer; lay before God your troubles, beg his grace, and above all that you may love him. None can exempt himself from loving; for none can live without a heart, nor the heart without love.

WHY should any amuse themselves, in seeking reasons for loving LOVE itself: Let us love without reasoning about it; and we shall find ourselves filled with love, before the others have learned the reasons which induce to it. Make trial of this love, and you will be wiser in it than the most skilful philosophers. In love, as in every thing else, experience instructs better than reasoning. Oh come then drink at this fountain of living waters, instead of the broken cisterns of the Creature, which far from allaying your thirst, only tends continually to augment it. Did ye once drink at this fountain, ye would not seek elsewhere for any thing to quench your thirst; for while ye still continue to draw from this source, ye would thirst no longer
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after the world : But if ye quit it, alas ! the enemy has the ascendant ; he will give you of his poisoned draughts, which may have an apparent sweetness, but will assuredly rob you of life.

THUS, I forsook the fountain of living water when I left off prayer. I became as a *vineyard exposed to pillage*, whose hedges torn down give liberty to all the passengers to ravage it. I began to seek in the creature what I had found in GOD. He left me to myself, because I first left him ; and it was his will by permitting me to sink into the horrible pit, to make me feel the necessity I was in, of approaching him in prayer. Thou hast said, that *thou wilt destroy those adulterous souls who depart from thee*. Alas ! it is their departure alone which causes their destruction, since, in departing from thee, Oh Sun of Righteousness, they enter into the regions of darkness and the coldness of death, from whence they would never rise, if thou didst not revisit them ; if thou didst not by thy divine light, illuminate their darkness, and by thy enlivening warmth, melt their icy hearts, and restore them to life.

I FELL then into the greatest of all misfortunes ; for I wandered yet further and further from thee, Oh my GOD, and thou didst gradually retire from a heart which had quitted thee. Yet such is thy goodness, that it seemed as if thou hadst left me with regret ; and when this heart was desirous to return again unto thee, with what speed didst thou come to meet it. This proof of thy love and mercy, shall be to me an everlasting testimony of thy goodness and of my own ingratitude.

I BECAME still more passionate than I had ever been, as age gave more force to nature. I was frequently

quently guilty of lying ; I felt my heart corrupt and vain ; the spark of divine grace was almost extinguished in me, and I fell into a state of indifference and indevotion ; tho' I still carefully kept up outside appearances ; and the habit I had acquired of behaving at church, made me appear better than I was. Vanity, which had been excluded my heart, now resumed its seat. I began to pass a great part of my time before a looking-glass. I found so much pleasure in viewing myself therein, that I thought others were in the right who practised the same. Instead of making use of this exterior, which God had given me, that I might love him the more, it became to me only the means of a vain complacency. All seemed to me to look beautiful in my person, but I saw not that it covered a polluted soul.—This rendered me so inwardly vain, that I doubt whether any ever exceeded me therein, but there was an affected modesty in my outward deportment that would have deceived the world.

THE high esteem I had for myself made me find faults in every one else of my own sex. I had no eyes but to see my own good qualities, and to discover the defects of others. I hid my own faults from myself, or if I remarked any, yet to me they appeared little in comparison of others. I excused, and even figured them to myself as perfections. Every idea I had of others and of myself was false. I loved reading to such excess, particularly romances, that I spent whole days and nights at them ; sometimes the day broke whilst I continued to read, in so much, that for a length of time I almost lost the habit of sleeping ; I was ever eager to get to the end of the book, in hopes of finding something to satisfy a certain craving which I found within me, but my thirst for reading was only encreased the more I read.

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These books are strange inventions to destroy youth : For if they caused no other hurt than the loss of our precious time, is not that too much ? I was not restrained, but rather encouraged to read them under this fallacious pretext, that they taught one to speak well.

MEANWHILE, thro' thy abundant mercy, Oh my GOD, thou camest to seek me from time to time. Thou didst indeed knock at the door of my heart, I was often penetrated with the most lively sorrow and shed abundance of tears, I was afflicted to find my state so different from what it was when I enjoyed thy sacred presence ; but my tears were fruitless and my grief in vain. I could not of myself get out of this wretched state. I wished some hand as charitable as powerful would extricate me, but as for myself I had no power. If I had had any friend, who would have examined the cause of this evil, and made me have recourse again to prayer, which was the only means of relief, all would have been well. I was (like the prophet) *in a deep abyss of mire*, which I could not get out of. I met with reprimands for being in it, but none were kind enough to reach out a helping hand to free me : And when I tried vain efforts to get out, I only sunk the deeper, and each fruitless essay made me see my own impotence, and rendered me more afflicted and miserable.

OH ! how much compassion has this sad experience given me for sinners, as it has taught me why so few of them emerge from the miserable state into which they have fallen ; because such as see it only cry out against their disorders, and frighten them with threats of future punishment. These cries and threats at first make some impression, and they use some weak efforts after liberty : But, after
having

having experienced their insufficiency, they gradually abate in their design ; and lose their courage for trying any more. And all that man can say to them afterwards is but lost labour, tho' one preach to them incessantly. When any for relief run to confess, the only true remedy for them is prayer ; to present themselves before GOD, as criminals ; and to beg strength of him to rise out of this state ; they would then soon be changed, and brought *out of the mire and clay*. But the devil has falsely persuaded the doctors and the wise men of the age, that, in order to pray, 'tis necessary first to be perfectly converted. Hence people are dissuaded from it, and hence there is rarely any conversion that is durable. The devil is outrageous only against prayer, and those that exercise it ; because he knows it is the true means of taking his prey from him. He lets us undergo all the austerities we will, and neither persecutes those that enjoy them, nor those that practice them. But no sooner does one enter into a spiritual life, a life of prayer, but they must prepare for strange crosses. As all manner of persecutions and contempts in this world are reserved for that life.*

MISERABLE as the condition was to which I was reduced by my infidelities, and the little succour I had from my confessor, I did not fail to say my vocal prayers every day, to confess pretty

* WE see in this paragraph that she was, at the time of writing it, enlightened in a good degree to discover the emptiness and deception of two of the articles imposed by the Church of *Rome* as duties, viz. (1) The recourse to confessors for the cure of inward trouble, and (2) The use of bodily austerities ; instead of both these, she recommends the faithful application of the soul to Him who is Omnipresent, and the only *physician of value*.

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often, and to communicate almost every fortnight. Sometimes I went to church to weep, and to pray to the blessed virgin to obtain my conversion. I loved to hear any one speak of God, and would never tire with the conversation. When my father spoke of him, I was transported with joy; and when he and my mother went on any pilgrimage, and were to set off very early in the morning, I either did not go to bed the night before, or hired the girls to wake me timely. My father's conversation at such times was always of divine matters, which afforded me the highest delight, and I preferred that subject to any other. I also loved the poor, and was charitable, even whilst I was so very faulty as I have described. How strange may this seem to some, and how hard to reconcile things so very opposite*!

C H A P,

* HAVING speedily passed over her childish years, chequered with the dangers incident to that age, in respect both of her person and her morals, her scene of life begins to appear more interesting.

NOW blooming in youth, extolled for her beauty, admired of some, and envied of others, she becomes exposed (but for a short space) to the snares of the world, and of her own vanity co-operating with them.

SOON, ah soon! she finds herself stopt in her career, snatched in her bloom, and involved in the miseries of a matrimonial state, not of her own choice, but imposed on her by that of her parents.

WE are now about entering a chapter, the perusal of which may even strike the obdurate and insensible with some feelings of compassion for her early and sudden change; no longer at liberty to range in life, and look around it, in order to make a choice of what might be agreeable to her; instead of that, chained down under

C H A P. VI.

AFTERWARDS we came to *Paris*, where my vanity increased. No cost was spared to make me appear to advantage. I was forward enough to shew myself and expose my pride, in making a parade of this vain beauty, wanting to be loved of every one and to love none. Several apparently advantageous offers of marriage were made for me; but God, unwilling to have me lost, did not permit matters to succeed. My father still found difficulties, which my all-wise Creator raised for my salvation; for had I married any of these persons, I should have been much exposed, and my vanity would have had means of extending itself in a wider circle.

THERE was one person who had asked for me in marriage for several years, whom my father, for family reasons, had always refused. His manners were opposite to my vanity. Nevertheless, a fear lest I should leave this country, together with the

under ceaseless oppressions, without hope of freedom, where every thing was perpetually dark, sour and grating.

HER troubles indeed, through the goodness of God to her, took the best turn, as they induced her to have recourse to him for his assistance to bear her hard lot: and to discharge every duty requisite in it: Yet, certainly cruel is the conduct of parents, who, from sordid views, force their children for life into what is so opposite to their peace. Tho' the Father of Mercies often sanctifies troubles, yet he approves not *our doing evil that good may come of it, or, committing sin that grace may abound.*

the affluent circumstances of this gentleman, induced my father, in spite of both his own and my mother's reluctance, to promise me to him ; which was done without consulting me. They made me sign the marriage articles without letting me know what they were ; tho' I was well pleased with the thoughts of marriage, flattering myself with a hope of being thereby set at full liberty, and delivered from the ill treatment of my mother, which I drew upon myself by my want of docility : Yet God ordered it far otherwise ; and the condition which I found myself in afterwards, frustrated my hopes ; as I shall shew in the sequel.

How pleasing soever marriage was to my thoughts, I was all the time, after my being promised, and even long after my marriage, in extreme confusion, which arose from two causes : The first was my natural modesty, which I did not lose. I had much reserve towards men. The other was my vanity ; for tho' the husband provided was a more advantageous match than I merited, yet I did not think him such : And the figure which the others made, who had offered to me before, was vastly more engaging. Their rank would have placed me in view : And as I consulted, in these things, nothing but my vanity, whatever did not flatter that, was to me insupportable ; yet even this very vanity was I think of some advantage to me ; for it hindered me from falling into such things as cause the ruin of families. I would not do any thing which in the eye of the world, might render me culpable ; so strictly did I guard my exterior conduct. As I was modest at church, and had not been used to go abroad without my mother, and as the reputation of our house was great, I passed for virtuous.

I DID not see my spouse elect (at *Paris*) till two or three days before our marriage. I caused masses to be said all the time after my being contracted, to know the will of GOD ; wishing to do it in this affair at least. Oh goodness of my GOD, to bear with me at this time, and to allow me to pray to thee, with as much boldness, as if I had been one of thy friends, I who had rebelled against thee as thy greatest enemy.

THE joy of our nuptials was universal thro' our village : Amidst this general rejoicing, there appeared none sad but myself. I could neither laugh as others did, nor even eat ; so much was I depressed, tho' as yet I knew not the cause : But it was a foretaste which God gave me of what was to befall me. The remembrance of the desire I had of being a nun, came pouring in upon me. All who came to compliment me, the day after, could not forbear rallying me, because I wept bitterly. I answered them ; " Alas ! I had desired so much to " be a nun ; why then am I now married ? And by " what fatality has such a revolution befallen me ? " No sooner was I at the house of my new spouse, than I perceived that it would be for me *a house of mourning*.

I WAS obliged here to change my conduct ; for their manner of living was very different from that in my father's house. My mother-in-law, who had long been a widow, regarded nothing else but œconomy ; whereas at my father's house they lived in a noble manner, and great elegance ; and what my husband and mother-in-law called pride, and I called politeness, was observed there. I was very much surprized at this change, and so much the more, as my vanity wished to increase, rather than to be diminished.

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AT the time of my marriage I was a little past fifteen years of age. My surprize increased greatly, when I saw I must lose what I had acquired with so much application. At my father's house we were obliged to behave in a genteel way, and to speak with propriety. There all that I said was applauded. Here they never hearkened to me, but to contradict and find fault. If I spoke well, they said it was to give them a lesson : If any questions were started at my father's, he encouraged me to speak freely on such occasions : here if I spoke my sentiments, they said it was to enter into a dispute. They put me to silence in an abrupt and shameful manner, and scolded me from morning till night.

I SHOULD have some difficulty to give you an account of such matters, which cannot be done without wounding charity, if you had not forbidden me to omit any one article, and if you had not positively enjoined me to lay open every thing, and to write down all the particulars. But I request, before you proceed, not to look at things on the side of the creature, which would make these persons appear worse than they were ; for my mother-in-law had virtue, my husband had religion, and not any vice. It is requisite to look at every thing on the side of GOD, who permitted these things, only for my salvation, and because he would not have me lost. I had beside so much pride, that had I received any other treatment, I should have continued therein, and should not, perhaps, have turned to GOD, as I was afterwards induced to do, by the oppression of a multitude of crosses.

To return to my subject, my mother-in-law conceived such a desire to oppose me in every thing,
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that, in order to vex me, she made me perform the most humiliating offices; for her humour was so extraordinary, having never surmounted it in her youth, that she could hardly live with any body. Saying no other than vocal prayers, she did not see this kind of fault; or seeing it, and not drawing forces from the spirit of prayer, she could not get the better of it: And it was a pity, for she had both sense and merit. I was then made the victim of her humours. All her occupation was to thwart me continually, and she inspired the like sentiments into her son. They would make persons far my inferiors, take place above me. My mother who had a high sense of honour, could not endure that: And when she heard of it from others (for I told her nothing of it) she chid me, thinking I did it, not knowing how to keep my rank; and that I had no spirit; and upbraided me with many other things of that sort. I durst not tell her how it was with me; but I was almost ready to die with the agonies of grief and continual vexation. And what aggravated them all, was the remembrance of the persons who had proposed for me, the difference of their humour and manners, the love they had for me, with their agreeableness and politeness. All this made my present situation very doleful, and my burthen intolerable. My mother-in-law upbraided me in regard to my family, and spoke to me incessantly to the disadvantage of my father and mother. I never went to see them, but I had some bitter speeches to bear at my return.

ON the other hand my mother complained, that I did not come often enough to see her. She said I did not love her, that I was alienated from my own family, by being too much attached to my husband; so that I had a great deal of heavy sufferings to undergo on both sides.

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WHAT still further augmented my crosses was, that my mother related to my mother-in-law the pains I had cost her from my infancy : After which they reproached me, saying, *I was a changeling, and an evil spirit.* My husband obliged me to stay all the day long in my mother-in-law's room, without any liberty of retiring into my own apartment, so that I had not a moment's respite to breathe a little. She spoke disadvantageously of me to every body, to lessen the affection and esteem which some had entertained for me, and galled me with the grossest affronts before the finest company. This had not the effect she wanted ; for the more patiently they saw me bear it, the higher esteem they had for me.

INDEED, she found the secret of extinguishing my vivacity, and rendering me stupid ; so that some of my former acquaintance hardly knew me. Those who had not seen me before, said, " Is this " the person famed for such abundance of wit ? " She can't say two words. She is a fine picture." I was not yet sixteen years old. I was so much intimidated, that I durst not go out without my mother-in-law, and in her presence I could not speak. I knew not what I said ; so much fear had I of putting her out of humour, and drawing some bitter speech on myself.

To compleat my affliction, they presented me with a waiting-maid who was every thing with them. She kept me in sight like a governess, and treated me in a strange manner. For the most part I bore with patience these evils which I had no way to avoid : But sometimes I let some hasty answer escape me, which was a source of grievous crosses to me, and violent reproaches, for a long time.

time together. When I went out, the footmen had orders to give an account of every thing I did. It was then I began to eat the bread of sorrows, and to mingle my drink with my tears. At table they still did something to me, which covered me with confusion. I could not forbear tears, and thence had a double confusion, one for what they said to me, and the other for not being able to refrain weeping. I had no one to confide in who might share my affliction, and to assist me to bear it. When I would impart some hint of it to my mother, I drew upon myself new crosses, so that I resolved to have no confidant of my trouble. It was not from any natural cruelty that my husband treated me thus; for he loved me even passionately, but he was warm and hasty, and my mother-in-law continually irritated him about me.

It was in a condition so deplorable, Oh my God, that I began to perceive the need I had of thy assistance: For this situation was very perilous for me, as I met with none but admirers abroad, and such as flattered me to my hurt, it were to be feared, lest at such a tender age, amidst all the strange domestic crosses I had to bear, I might be seduced. But thou, by thy goodness and love gave it quite another turn. By these redoubled strokes thou didst draw me to thyself, and by thy crosses effected what thy caresses could not effect. Nay, even then thou madest use of my natural pride, to keep me within the limits of my duty. I knew that a woman of honour ought never to give suspicion to her husband. I was so very circumspect on that head, that I often carried it even to excess, so far as to refuse the hand to such as in politeness, offered me theirs. There happened to me an adventure which, by carrying my prudence too far, had like to have ruined me ;
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for things were taken contrary to their intent ; But my husband was sensible of my innocence, and the falshood of the insinuations of my mother-in-law.

SUCH weighty crosses, made me return to God. I began to deplore the sins of my youth ; for since my marriage I had not committed any voluntarily ; Yet I still had some sentiments of vanity remaining, which I wished not to have. However my troubles now counterbalanced them. Moreover many of them appeared just to the little light I then had ; for I was not yet illuminated to penetrate the essence of vanity ; I fixed my thoughts only on its appearance. I tried to amend my life by penance, and by a general confession, the most exact that I ever yet had made. I quitted all my romances, for which I lately had such a fondness. Tho' some time before my marriage, it had been damped by reading the gospel, I was so affected therewith, and discovered that character of truth therein, as to put me out of conceit with all the other books. They appeared then to me only full of lies and deceit. I now put away even indifferent books, to have none but such as were profitable. I resumed the practice of prayer, and endeavoured to offend my God no more. I felt his love gradually recover the ascendant in my heart, and banish every other. Yet I had still an intolerable vanity, and self-complacency, which has been my most 'grievous and obstinate sin.

My crosses redoubled every day. What rendered them more painful was, that my mother-in-law, not content with the bitterest speeches, which she uttered against me, both in public and private. She would break out in a passion about the smallest trifles, and scarcely be pacified for a fortnight together,

gether. I passed part of my time in bewailing myself when I could be alone : And my grief became every day more bitter. Sometimes I could not contain myself, when I saw girls, who were my domesticks, and owed me submission, treat me so ill. Nevertheless I did what I could to subdue my temper, which has cost me not a little.

SUCH stunning blows so impaired the vivacity of my nature, that I became *like a lamb that is shearing*. I prayed to our LORD to assist me, and he was my refuge. As my age differed from theirs (for my husband was twenty two years older than I) I saw well that there was no probability of changing their humours, which were fortified with years : As I found that whatever I said was offensive, even those things which others would have been pleased with, I knew not what to do. One day, weighed down with grief, about six months after I was married, being alone, I was tempted even to cut out my tongue, that I might no longer irritate those who seized at every word with rage and resentment —But thou O GOD didst stop me short and shewed me my folly. I prayed continually, I communicated, I wished even to become dumb, so simple and ignorant was I. Tho' I have had my share of crosses, I never found any so difficult to support, as that of perpetual contrariety, without relaxation ; of doing all one can to please, without ever succeeding therein, but even still offending by the very means designed to oblige, and being kept with such persons, in a most severe confinement, from morning till night, without ever daring to quit them. I have found that great crosses overwhelm, and stifle all anger at once. But such a continual contrariety irritates and stirs up a sourness at the heart. It has such a strange effect, that

that it requires the utmost violence, of self restraint not to break out into vexation and rage.

SUCH was my condition in marriage, rather that of a slave than of a free person. And for a new augmentation of my disgraces, I perceived, four months after my marriage that my husband was gouty. This malady, caused me many crosses, both within and without. He had the gout twice this year, six weeks each time. Soon after it returned again; and he had it still worse than before. He was so much plagued with it, that he came no more out of his room, nor often out of his bed, which he usually kept for several months. I carefully attended him, tho' so very young. I did not fail exerting myself to the utmost in my duty. But alas! all this did not gain me their friendship. I had not even the consolation to know whether what I did was agreeable: I denied myself all the most innocent diversions, to continue with my husband; and did whatever I thought would please him. Sometimes he suffered me quietly, and then I esteemed myself very happy: But at other times I seemed insupportable. My particular friends said, "I was of a fine age indeed to be a nurse to an invalid, and that it was a shameful thing that I did not set more value on my talents." I answered them, "since I had a husband, I ought to share his painful as well as his pleasing circumstances." Besides my mother, instead of pitying me, reprimanded me sharply for my assiduity about my husband; assuring me that I should render myself unhappy by it; and that he would afterwards demand, as a duty, what I now did out of virtue. But oh my GOD, how different were thy thoughts from theirs, what appeared *without* from what passed *within*! My husband had that foible, that when any one said

said any thing to him against me, he flew into a passion at once. It was the conduct of providence over me : For he was a man of reason and loved me much. When I was sick, he was inconsolable. I believe, had it not been for my mother-in-law, and the girl I have spoken of, I should have been very happy with him : For most men have their passions ; and it is the duty of a reasonable woman to bear them peaceably, without irritating them more by cross replies.

THESE things thou hast ordered, oh my God, in such a manner by thy goodness, that I have since seen, it was necessary for making me die to my vain and haughty nature. I should not have had power to destroy it myself, if thou hadst not accomplished it by an all-wise œconomy of thy providence. I prayed for patience with great earnestness ; nevertheless some sallies of my natural liveliness escaped me, and vanquished the resolutions I had taken of being silent. This was doubtless permitted, that my self-love might not be nourished by my patience : For a slip of a moment caused me months of humiliation, reproach and sorrow, and proved the occasion of new crosses.

CHAP. VII.

DURING the first year I did not make a proper use of my afflictions. I still was vain. I sometimes lied, to excuse myself to my husband and mother-in-law, because I stood strangely in awe of them. Sometimes I fell into a passion, their conduct appeared so very unreasonable, and especially their countenancing that most provoking treatment of the girl who served me. For as to my mother-in-law, her age and rank rendered her conduct more tolerable. But thou, Oh my God, opened my eyes to see things in a very different light. I found in thee reasons for suffering, which I had never found in the creature: I afterwards saw clearly and reflected with joy, that this conduct, as unreasonable as it seemed, and as mortifying as it was, was quite necessary for me; for had I been applauded here as I was at my father's, I should have grown intollerably proud. I had a fault common to most of our sex, I could not hear a beautiful woman praised, without finding some fault in her, artfully causing it to be remarked, to lessen the good which was said of her. This fault of mine continued long, and was the fruit of gross and malignant pride, and extravagantly extolling any one proceeds from a like source.

I BECAME pregnant of my first child, which induced them during the time to take great care of me, and my crosses were thereby somewhat mitigated. Indeed I was so ill that it was enough to excite the compassion of the most indifferent. Beside they had so great a desire of having children to inherit their fortunes, that they were continually afraid lest I should any way hurt myself. Yet
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When I had advanced far in my pregnancy, this care and tenderness of me abated : And once, as my mother-in-law had treated me in a very grating manner, I had the malice to feign a cholic, to give them in my turn some alarm ; but as I saw this little artifice gave them too much pain, I told them I was better. No creature could be more heavily loaden with sickness than I was during my pregnancy. Beside continual heavings, I had so strange a distaste, except for some fruit, that I could not bear the sight of food. I had likewise continual swoonings and violent pains. I had a very sore time in my delivery ; and continued long weak. There was indeed sufficient to exercise patience, and I was enabled to offer up my sufferings to our LORD. I took a fever, which rendered me so weak, that after several weeks I could scarce bear to be moved, to have my bed made. When I began to recover, an imposthume fell upon my breast, which was forced to be laid open in two places, which gave me great pain : Yet all these maladies seemed to me only a shadow of troubles, in comparison of those I suffered in the family ; which far from diminishing, daily increased. I was also subject to a very violent head-ach. Indeed life was so wearisome to me, that those maladies which were thought mortal did not frighten me.

THIS lying-in set off my person, and consequently served to encrease my vanity, I was glad of being marked with regard. And, far from avoiding the occasions thereof, I went to the public walks, (tho' but seldom ;) and when in the streets, I pulled off my mask out of vanity, and drew off my gloves to shew my hands. Could there be greater folly ? After falling into these weaknesses, I used to weep bitterly at home ; yet when occasions offered, I fell into them again.

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THERE.

THERE happened in the family an affair of great consequence, in regard to our temporals. The loss was very considerable. It cost me strange crosses for above a year, not that I cared for the losses which it caused. But I seemed to be the butt of all the ill humours of the family. It would require a volume to describe all that I suffered during this time. With what pleasure did I sacrifice these temporals ; and how often resign myself to have begged my bread, if GOD had so ordered it ! My mother-in-law was inconsolable. She bid me pray to GOD for these things ; but to me that was wholly impossible. Oh my dearest LORD ! never could I pray to thee about the world, or the things thereof ; nor sully my sacred addresses to thy Majesty with the dirt of the earth : No, I rather wished to renounce it all, and every thing beside whatsoever, for the sake of thy love, and the enjoyment of thy presence in that kingdom, which is not of this world. I wholly sacrificed myself to thee, even earnestly begging thee rather to reduce our family to beggary, than suffer it to offend thee. In my own mind I excused my mother-in-law, saying to myself, “ if thou hadst taken the pains to “ scrape and save like her, thou wouldst not be so “ indifferent at seeing so much lost. Thou enjoy- “ est what cost thee nothing, and reapest what “ thou hast not sowed.” Yet all these thoughts could not make me sensible to our losses. I even formed agreeable ideas of our going to the hospital. No state appeared to me so poor and miserable, which I should not have thought easy, in comparison of the continual domestic persecutions I underwent. My father, who loved me tenderly, and whom I honoured beyond expression, knew nothing of it. GOD so permitted it, that I should have him also displeased with me for some time ; for my mother

ther was continually telling him that I was an ungrateful creature, shewing no regard for them, but all for my husband's family. Appearances were against me ; for I did not go to see them near as often as I should have done. But they knew not the captivity I was in ; and what I was obliged to bear in defending them. These complaints of my mother, and a trivial affair that fell out, lessened a little my father's fond regard for me ; but it did not hold long. My mother-in-law reproached me, saying, " No afflictions befell them 'till I came into the house. All misfortunes came 'along with me." On the other side, my mother wanted me to exclaim against my husband, which I could never submit to do.

WE continued to meet with loss after loss, the King retrenching a considerable share of our revenues, besides great sums of money, which we lost by *L'Hotel de Ville*. I could have no rest or peace, in the midst of such great afflictions. I had no mortal either to console me, or to advise with. My sister, who had educated me, had departed this life. She died two months before my marriage ; and I had no confidence in any other.

I declare, that I find much repugnance in saying so many things of my mother-in-law, and yet more in what I mention of my husband, as I doubt not but my own indiscretion, my caprice, and the occasional sallies of a warm temper, drew many of the crosses upon me. And, altho' I had what the world calls patience, yet I had neither a relish or love for the cross, and hence I fell into so many faults. Their conduct towards me, which appears so unreasonable, should not be looked upon with worldly eyes ; we should look higher, and then we shall perceive, that it was directed by Providence
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for my eternal advantage. Indeed I should have yielded to the repugnance I felt, and been totally silent with regard to their treatment of me, were it not in obedience to you Sir.

I now dressed my hair in the most moderate manner, never painted, and to subdue this vanity which still had possession of me, I rarely looked in the glass; my reading was confined to books of devotion, such as *Thomas a Kempis*, and the works of St. *Francis de Sales*. I read these aloud for the improvement of the servants, whilst the maid was combing me, and I suffered myself to be dressed just as she pleased, which freed me from a deal of trouble, and took away the occasions wherein my vanity used to be exercised. I knew not how things were; but they always liked me, and thought all well in point of dress.—If on some particular days I wanted to appear better, it proved worse; and the more indifferent I was about dress, the better I appeared. How often have I gone to church, not so much to worship God as to be seen. Other women, jealous of me, affirmed that I painted; and told my confessor who chid me for it, tho' I assured him I was innocent. I often spoke in my own praise, and sought to raise myself, by depreciating others: Yet these faults gradually decreased; for I was very sorry afterwards for having committed them. I often examined myself very strictly, writing down my faults and slips, from week to week, and month to month, to see how much I was improved or reformed. But alas! this labour, tho' fatiguing, was but of little service, because I placed most of my trust in my own cares. I wished indeed to be reformed, but my good desires were weak and languid.

MY husband's absence was so long, and in the mean time my crosses and vexations at home so great, that I determined to go to him. My mother-in-law strongly opposed it ; but this once my father interfering, and insisting on it, she let me go. At my arrival I found he had like to have died. Thro' vexation and fretting* he was very much changed ; for he could not finish his affairs, having no liberty to attend them, keeping himself concealed at the *hotel de Longueville*, where *Madam de Longueville* was extremely kind to me. But as I appeared publickly, he was in great fear lest I should make him known ; in a rage he bid me return home ; but love, and my long absence from him, surmounting every other reason, he soon relented, and suffered me to stay with him. He kept me eight days, without letting me stir out of his chamber ; till, fearing the effects of such a close confinement on my constitution, he desired me to go and take a walk in the garden, where I met *Madam de Longueville*, who testified great joy on seeing me.

I CANNOT express all the kindness I met with in this house. All the domestics here served me with emulation, and applauded me on account of my poor miserable person, and exterior deportment : Yet I was much on my guard, against paying too great attention thereto. I never entered into discourse with any man when alone. I admitted none into my coach, not even my relations, unless my husband were in it. Nor did I go into any man's coach. In short, there was not any rule of discretion, which I did not duly observe, to avoid giving any suspicion to my husband, or subject of calumny to others. So much attention had I to a vain point of honour, and so little for the true honour, which is to please God. Every one studied there how to contribute to divert or oblige me.

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Outwardly every thing appeared agreeable, but chagrin had so much overcome and ruffled my husband, that I had continually something to bear. Sometimes he threatened to throw the supper out of the windows : But I said to him, “ he would then “ do me an injury, as I had a keen appetite.” I made him laugh, and laughed with him. This appeased him ; and the manner in which I spoke diverted him. Before that, melancholy prevailed over all my endeavours, and over the love he had for me. But GOD both armed me with patience, and gave me the grace to return him no answer : so that the devil, who attempted to draw me into some offence, was forced to retire in confusion, thro’ the signal assistance of that grace.

I FELL into a languishing state ; I loved my GOD, and was unwilling to displease him, and I was inwardly grieved on account of that vanity, which still I found myself unable to eradicate : these inward distresses, together with those oppressive crosses, which I had daily to encounter, at length threw me into sickness ; and as I was unwilling to incommode the *Hotel de Longueville*, I had myself moved to another house. The disease proved violent and extremely tedious, insomuch that the physicians despaired of my life. The priest, who was a pious man, seemed fully satisfied with the state of my mind, and said, “ I should die like a saint.” But my sins were too present to my mind, and too painful to my heart, to have such a presumption. At midnight they administered the sacrament to me, as they hourly expected my departure. It was a scene of general distress in the family, and among all that knew me. There were none indifferent to my death but myself, I beheld it without fear, and was rendered insensible to its approach. It was far otherwise with my husband

band, he was inconsolable, and in an agony of grief, when he saw there was no hope left ; but I no sooner began to recover, than notwithstanding all his love his usual fretfulness returned. I now recovered almost miraculously ; and to me this disorder proved a great blessing : for beside a very great patience under violent pains, it served to instruct me much in my view of the emptiness of all worldly things ; it detached me from myself and gave me new courage to suffer better than I had yet done. The love of God gathered strength in my heart, with a desire to please and be faithful to him in my condition. I reaped several other advantages from it, which I need not relate. I had yet six months to drag along with a slow fever and hepatic flux. It was thought that would have brought me to my end. But thy time, Oh my God, was not yet arrived for taking me to thyself. Thy designs over me were widely different from the expectations of those about me ; it being thy determination to make me both the object of thy mercy and the victim of thy justice.

C H A P. VIII.

AFTER long languishing at length I regained my former health; about which time my dear mother departed this life, in great tranquillity of mind; having, beside her other good qualities, been particularly charitable to the poor. This virtue; so acceptable to God, he was graciously pleased to begin rewarding even in this life, with such a spirit of resignation, that though she was but twenty-four hours sick, she was made perfectly easy about every thing that was near and dear to her in this world.—I now applied myself to my duties, never failing to practise that of prayer twice a day. I watched over myself, to subdue my spirit continually. I went to visit the poor in their houses, assisted them in their distempers and distresses; and did (according to my understanding) all the good I knew. Thou, oh my God, increased both my love and my patience, in proportion to my sufferings. I regretted not the temporal advantages with which my mother distinguished my brother above me; yet at home they fell on me about that, as about every thing else. I was also very much distressed with a second pregnancy, had for some time a tertian ague, and was very feeble. I did not indeed serve thee yet with that fervour which thou wast pleased to give me soon after: For I would still have been glad to reconcile thy love with the love of myself and of the creatures; and unhappily I always found some who loved me, and whom I could not forbear wishing to please; not that I loved them, but for the love I bore to myself.

A L A D Y.

A LADY, who was an exile, came to my father's house. He offered her an apartment in it which she accepted, and staid there a long time. She was one of true piety and inward devotion. She had a great esteem for me, because I desired to love God, and employed myself in the exterior works of Charity. She remarked that I had the virtues of an active and bustling life ; but had not yet attained the simplicity of prayer which she experienced. Sometimes she dropped a word to me on that subject : But as my time was not yet come, I did not understand her. Her example instructed me more than her words. I observed on her countenance something which marked a great enjoyment of the presence of God. This I tried, by the exertion of studied reflection and thoughts, to attain, but with much trouble to little purpose. I wanted to have by my own efforts what I could not acquire but in ceasing from all efforts.

My Father's nephew, of whom I have made mention before, was returned from *Cochinchina*, to carry over some priests from *Europe*. I was exceedingly glad to see him, well remembering what good his first passing by had done me. The Lady above mentioned was no less rejoiced than I; they understood one another immediately and conversed together in a spiritual language. The virtue of this excellent relation charmed me ; and I admired his continual prayer without being able to comprehend it. I endeavoured to meditate, and to think on God without intermission, to utter prayers and ejaculations, but could not acquire, by all my toil, what God at length gave me himself, and which is experienced only in simplicity. My cousin did all he could to attach me more strongly to God. He conceived an exceeding great affection for me. The purity he observed in me from the corruptions

of the age, the abhorrence of sin at a time of life when others are beginning to relish the pleasures of it, (for I was not yet eighteen) gave him a great tenderness for me. I complained to him of my faults ingenuously ; for these I saw clearly ; but as the difficulties I found, of entirely reforming myself much abated my courage, he cheered and exhorted me to support myself, and to persevere in my good endeavours for it. He would fain have introduced me into a more simple manner of prayer, but I was not yet prepared for it.

I BELIEVE his prayers were more effectual than his words ; for no sooner was he gone out of my father's house, than thou, oh my divine Love ! manifested thy favour to me. The desire I had to please thee, the tears I shed, the manifold pains I underwent, the labours I sustained, and the little fruit I reaped from them, moved thee with compassion. Such was the state of my soul, when thy goodness, overpassing all my vileness and infidelities, and abounding in proportion to my wretchedness—now granted me in a moment, what all my own efforts could never procure.—For beholding me rowing with such laborious toil, the breath of thy divine operations turned in my favour, and carried me full sail over this sea of affliction.

I HAD often spoke to my confessor about the great anxiety it gave me to find I could not meditate, nor exert my imagination in order to pray. Subjects of prayer which were too extensive, were useless to me ; such as were short and pithy suited me better ; but my confessor, I found, did not comprehend the matter, or understand my meaning.

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AT length, GOD permitted a very religious person, of the order of St. FRANCIS to pass by my father's habitation. He had intended going another way, that was shorter and more commodious; but a secret power changed his design. He saw there was something for him to do, and imagined that GOD had called him for the conversion of a man of some distinction in that country: But his labours there proved fruitless. It was the conquest of my soul which was designed. As soon as he arrived in our country, he came to see my father, who was rejoiced at his coming. At this time I was lying-in of my second son, and my father dangerously ill, and expected to die. For some time they concealed his sickness from me, on account of my condition; till an indiscreet person abruptly told me. Instantly I arose, all weak as I was, and went to see him at the hazard of my life; and a dangerous illness it cost me. My father was recovered, but not entirely; yet enough to give me new marks of his affection, I told him of the strong desire I had to love GOD, and my great sorrow at not being able to do it fully. My father, as he had a great fondness for me, thought he could not give me a more solid indication thereof, than in procuring me an acquaintance with this worthy man. He told me what he knew of him, and urged me to go see him,

I MADE at first a difficulty of doing it, being intent on observing the rules of the strictest prudence. However, my father's repeated instances had with me the weight of a positive command, I thought I could not do that amiss, which I only did in obedience to him. I therefore took a kinswoman along with me, and
went,

went. At first he seemed a little confused; for he was reserved towards women. Being newly come out of a five years solitude, he was surprised that I was the first to address him. He spoke not a word for some time. I knew not what to attribute his silence to. I did not hesitate to speak to him, and to tell him in a few words, my difficulties about prayer. He presently replied, "It is, Madam, because you seek WITHOUT what you have WITHIN. Accustom yourself to seek GOD in your heart, and you will there find him."

HAVING said these words, he left me. They were to me like the stroke of a dart, which penetrated thro' my heart. I felt at this instant, a very deep wound, a wound so delightful that I desired not to be cured. These words brought into my heart, what I had been seeking so many years; or rather they discovered to me what was there, and which I had not enjoyed for want of knowing it. Oh my Lord! Thou wast in my heart, and demanded only a simple turning of my mind inward, to make me perceive thy presence. Oh infinite Goodness! How was I running hither and thither to seek thee, my life was a burden to me, tho' my happiness was within myself. I was poor in the midst of riches, and ready to perish with hunger, near a table plentifully spread, and a continual feast. Oh Beauty, antient and new! Why have I known thee so late! Alas! I sought thee where thou wast not, and did not seek thee where thou wast. It was for want of understanding these words of thy gospel, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here, or lo there: For behold, the

“the kingdom of God is within you.” This I now experienced, For thou becamest my King, and my heart thy kingdom, wherein thou didst reign supreme, and performed all thy sacred Will,

I TOLD this good man, “that I did not know what he had done to me, that my heart was quite changed, that God was there; for from that moment he had given me an experience of his presence in my soul; not by thought or any application of mind, but as a thing really possessed after the sweetest manner.” I experienced those words in the Canticles: “Thy Name is as precious ointment poured forth; therefore do the virgins love thee.” For I felt in my soul an unction which, as a salutary balsam, healed in a moment all my wounds. I slept not that whole night, because thy love, oh my God! flowed in me like delicious oyl; and burned, as a fire which was going to devour in an instant all that was left of *self*. I was suddenly so altered that I was hardly to be known either by myself or others. I found no longer those troublesome faults or reluctances. They all disappeared, being consumed, like chaff in a great fire.

I NOW became desirous that the instrument hereof might become my director, preferable to any other. This good father, however, could not readily resolve to charge himself with my conduct, though he saw so surprizing a change effected by the hand of God. Several reasons induced him to excuse himself; first my person, then my youth, for I was only nineteen years of age; and lastly, a promise he had made to

to GOD, from a distrust of himself, never to take upon himself the direction of any of our sex, unless GOD, by some particular Providence, should charge him therewith. However, upon my earnest and repeated request to him to become my director, he said he would pray to GOD thereupon, and desired I should do so too. As he was at prayer, it was said to him, "Fear not that charge; she is my spouse." When I heard this, it affected me greatly. "What (said I to myself) a frightful monster of iniquity, who have done so much to offend my GOD, in abusing his favours, and requiting them with ingratitude; and now to be thus declared his spouse!"——After this he consented to my request.

NOTHING now was more easy to me than prayer. Hours passed away like moments, while I could hardly do any thing else but pray. The fervency of my love allowed me no intermission. It was a prayer of rejoicing and possessing, devoid of all busy imaginations, and forced reflections; it was a prayer of the Will, and not of the Head, wherein the taste of GOD was so great, so pure, unblended and uninterrupted, that it drew and absorbed the powers of my soul into a profound recollection, without act or discourse. For I had now no sight but of JESUS CHRIST alone. All else was excluded, in order to love with the greater extent, without any selfish motives or reasons for loving.

THIS sovereign power, the Will, absorbed the two others, the memory and understanding, into itself, and centered them in LOVE——not but that they still actually subsisted; but their

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operations were in a manner imperceptible and passive; for they were no longer stopped or retarded by the multiplicity, but collected and united in One.—So the rising of the sun does not extinguish the stars, but overpowers and absorbs them in the lustre of his incomparable Glory.

C H A P. IX.

SUCH was the prayer that was given me at once, which is far above extasies, transports and visions. All these gifts are less pure, and more subject to the illusion or deceits from the enemy.

VISIONS are in the inferior powers of the Soul, and cannot produce true union—therefore the Soul must not dwell or rely upon them, or be retarded by them—they are but favours and gifts, 'tis the Giver alone must be our object and aim.

IT is of such that St. PAUL speaks, where he says, That “Satan transforms himself into an “angel of light.” 2 Cor. 11. 18, which is generally the case with such as are fond of visions, and lay a stress on them: because they are apt to convey a vanity to the soul, or at least to hinder it from humbly attending to God only.

EXTASIES arise from a sensible relish, and may be termed a kind of spiritual sensuality, wherein the soul letting itself go too far, by reason of the sweetness it finds in them, falls imperceptibly

ceptibly into decay. The crafty enemy presents such sort of interior elevations and raptures, for baits to trepan the soul ; to render it sensual, to fill it with vanity and self-love, to fix its esteem and attention on the gifts of GOD, and to hinder it from following JESUS CHRIST in the way of renunciation, and of death to all things.

AND as to distinct interior words, they too are subject to illusion ; the enemy can form and counterfeit them : Or if they come from a good angel——(for GOD himself never speaks thus) we may mistake and misapprehend them——for they are spoke in a divine manner, but we construe them in a human and carnal manner.

BUT the immediate word of GOD—has neither tone nor articulation.—It is mute, silent, and unutterable ; for it is JESUS CHRIST himself the real and essential WORD—who in the centre of the Soul, that is disposed for receiving him, never one moment ceases from his living, fruitful, and divine operation.

——OH thou Word made Flesh—whose silence is inexpressible eloquence—thou canst never be misapprehended or mistaken ;—thou becomest the Life of our Life, and the Soul of our Soul :—How infinitely is thy Language elevated above all the utterance of human and finite articulation. Thy adorable Power, all efficacious in the soul that has received it, communicates itself thro' them to others, and as a divine seed becomes fruitful to eternal life.

THE revelations of things to come are also very dangerous ; for the devil can counterfeit them, as he did formerly in the heathen temples,
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where he uttered Oracles. Frequently they raise false ideas, vain hopes, and frivolous expectations; take up the mind with future events, hinder it from dying to self, and prevent it following JESUS CHRIST in his poverty, abnegation, and death.

WIDELY different is *The Revelation of JESUS CHRIST*, Gal. 1. 16. mentioned by St. Paul. This is made to the Soul when the eternal Word is communicated. It makes us *new creatures, created anew in Him*. This revelation is what the devil cannot counterfeit. From hence proceeds the only safe transport or extasy, which is operated by naked faith alone, and dying *even to the gifts of GOD*, how sublime and excellent soever they may appear; because as long as the soul continues resting in them, it does not fully renounce itself, and so never passing into GOD, loses the real enjoyment of the Giver, by attachments to the gifts. This is truly an unutterable loss.

LEST I should let my mind go after these gifts, and steal myself from thy love, oh my GOD, thou wast pleased to fix me in a continual adherence to thy self alone. Souls thus directed get the shortest way. They are to expect great sufferings, especially if they are mighty in faith, in mortification and deadness to all but GOD. A pure and disinterested love, and intenseness of mind for the advancement of thy interest alone.—These are the dispositions thou didst then implant in me, and even a fervent desire of suffering for thee. The cross, which I had hitherto borne only with resignation was now become
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my delight, and the special object of my rejoicing.

CHAP. X.

I WRIT an account of my wonderful change, in point of happiness, to that good father who had been made the instrument of it. It filled him both with joy and astonishment. Oh my God, what penances did the love of sufferings induce me to undergo! I practised all the austerities I could imagine: But they were all too weak to satisfy the desire I had for suffering. Tho' my body was very delicate, the instruments of penance tore it without giving me pain enough, as I thought. I often kept wormwood in my mouth, and put coloquintida in my food; altho' I eat so little that it was wonderful how I lived, being continually in extreme weakness. I was impelled to deprive myself of the most innocent indulgences: all that could gratify my taste was denied it, and I took every thing that could mortify and disgust it, in so much that my appetite, which had been extremely delicate, was so far conquered, that at length I could scarcely prefer one thing to another.

I dressed loathsome sores and wounds, and gave remedies to the sick. At my first engaging in this sort of employ, my stomach used to turn; and it was with the greatest difficulty I was able to bear it. But as soon as my aversion ceased, and that I could stand the most offensive things, other channels of employment were opened to me: For I did nothing of myself, but left myself to be wholly governed by my sovereign in all things.

WHEN

WHEN that good father asked me how I loved GOD, I answered, "Far more than the most passionate lover his beloved; and that even this comparison was inadequate, since the love of the creatures never can attain to this, either in strength or in depth." This love of GOD occupied my heart so constantly and so strongly, that I could think of nothing else, as indeed I judged nothing else worthy of my thoughts.

THE good father above mentioned was an excellent preacher. He was desired to preach in the parish to which I belonged. When I came, I was so strongly absorbed in GOD, that I could neither open my eyes, nor hear any thing he said. I found that thy word, oh my GOD, made its own impression on my heart, and there had its effect, without the mediation of words, or any attention to them. And I have found it so ever since, tho' after a different manner, according to the different degrees and states I have passed through. So deeply was I settled in the inward spirit of prayer, that I could scarce any more pronounce the vocal prayers,

THIS immersion in GOD absorbed all things therein. I could no more see the saints, or even the Blessed Virgin, out of GOD; but I beheld them all in him. And tho' I tenderly loved certain saints, as St. PETER, St. PAUL, St. MARY MAGDALENE, St. TERESA, yet I could not form to myself images of them, nor invoke any of them out of GOD,

A FEW weeks after I had received that interior wound of the heart, which had begun my change,

change, was held the feast of the blessed virgin, in the Cnovent in which was that good father my director. I went in the morning to get the indulgences, which are then dispensed, and was much surprised when I came there, and found that I could not attempt it ; tho' I stayed above five hours in the church. I was penetrated with so lively a dart of pure love, that I could not resolve to abridge by indulgences the pains due to my sins. " Oh my love ! I cried, I am " willing to suffer for thee. I find no other plea- " sure but in suffering for thee. Indulgences may " be good for those who know not the value of " sufferings, who choose not that thy divine jus- " tice should be satisfied ; who, having merce- " nary souls, are not so much afraid of displea- " sing thee, as of the pains annexed to sin." Yet, fearing I might be mistaken, and commit a fault in not getting the indulgences, for I had never heard of any one being in such a way before, I returned again to try to get them, but in vain ; so not knowing what to do, I resigned myself herein to our Lord ; and, when returned home, writ to that good father an account of my disposition and sentiments, in such a manner, that, preaching that day, he made what I had writ a part of his sermon, therein reciting it verbatim as I had wrote it.

I now quitted all companies, bade farewell for ever to plays and diversions, dancing, unprofitable walks and parties of pleasure. For two years I had left off dressing my hair, it became me, and my husband approved it. My only pleasure now was to steal some moments to be alone with thee, oh thou, who art my only Love ! All other pleasure was a pain to me. I lost not thy presence, which
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was given me by a continual infusion, not as I had imagined, by the efforts of the head, or force of thought in meditating on God, but in the bottom of the will, where I tasted with unutterable sweetness the enjoyment of the beloved object, yet not as I came to do afterwards, by an essential union, but by a *real union in the will*, which brought me to discern, in a happy experience, that the soul was created to enjoy its God.

As this union is the most perfect of all those which are operated in the powers, its effect is also much greater; for tho' the union of the other powers enlightens the understanding, and absorbs the memory; yet, if they are not accompanied with that of the will, they are of little use as they produce only transient effects. The union of the will subjects the soul to God, conforms it to all his pleasure, causes self-will gradually to die, and lastly drawing with it the other powers, by means of the charity with which it is filled, it causes them gradually to be reunited in the center, and lost therein, as to their own nature and operations,

THIS loss is called the *Annihilation of the powers*, for tho' in themselves they still subsist, yet they seem annihilated to us, in proportion as charity fills and inflames, it becomes so strong, as by degrees to surmount all the activity of the will of man, subjecting it to that of God, in such sort that when the soul is docile, and leaves itself to be purified, and emptied of all that which it has of its own, opposite to the will of God, it finds itself by little and little, detached from every motion

tion of its own, and placed in a holy indifference, wishing nothing but what God does and wills. But this never can be effected by the activity of our own will, even tho' it were employed in continual acts of resignation; because these, tho' very virtuous, are so far one's own actions, and cause the will to subsist in a multiplicity, in a kind of separate distinction or dissimilitude from God.

WHEN the Will of the creature entirely submits to that of the Creator, suffering freely and voluntarily—and yielding only a concurrence to the divine will (which is its absolute submission—) suffering itself to be totally surmounted and destroyed, by the operations of Charity. This absorbs the will into itself, consummates it in that of God, and purifies it from all narrowness, dissimilitude, and propriety or selfishness.

THE case is the same with the other two powers, whereinto, by means of charity, the two other theological virtues, Faith and Hope are introduced. Faith so strongly seizes on the *understanding*, as to make it decline all reasonings, all particular illuminations and illustrations, how sublime soever; which sufficiently demonstrates how far visions, revelations, extasies, &c. differ from this, and hinder the soul from being lost in God: For tho' by them it appears lost in him for some transient moments, yet it is not a true loss; since the soul which is entirely lost in God finds itself again no more. Faith then makes the soul lose every distinct light, in order to place it in its own pure light.

As we see that the sun with his general light, entirely covers or drowns all the little distinct lights of the stars, which (in its absence) glow, and are brightly discernible ; yet don't give us a light whereby we may see things, as they are, in their proper forms and colours : So visions and extasies, however discernible by reason of their little extent, (being very narrow and partial) cannot confirm us in the truth ; they are too liable to make us mistake by their uncertain glimmering. It is the same case with all the inward openings which are not from true FAITH. This Faith is the gift of the holy spirit, which, as it arises, undeceives the soul from the misconceptions occasioned by the others, and obscuring all the self-pleasing lights, puts it in the pure and sacred light of truth, which, altho' much less gratifying, is a thousand fold more secure than all others—and is properly the true light of this life, until that JESUS CHRIST, the eternal Light, rises in the Soul, and enlightens it himself. He who enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world, of the *new life* in GOD.—This is elevated,—but I have yielded myself to be carried away by that spirit which has caused mé to write.

THE memory too, finds all its little activities surmounted by degrees, and absorbed in hope, and finally the powers are all concentrated and lost in pure Charity, which ingulphs them into itself by means of their sovereign the WILL, for the Will is the sovereign of the powers, as Charity is the Queen of the Virtues, and unites them all in herself.

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—THIS reunion which is thus made is called, the *central union* or *unity*—because that by means of the Will and Charity, all are reunited, in the center of the Soul in GOD, our ultimate end.—According to St. John,—*He who dwelleth in Charity, or Love, dwelleth in GOD, for God is Love.*

THIS union of my will to thine, oh my GOD, and this ineffable presence was so sweet and powerful, that I was compelled to yield to its delightful power,—which was strict and severe to my minutest faults.—

C H A P. XL.

MY Senses (as I have described) were continually mortified, and under perpetual restraint. For it should be well noted, that to conquer them totally, it is necessary to deny them the smallest relaxation, until the victory is completed. We see those who content themselves in practising great outward austerities, and yet by indulging their senses in what is called innocent and necessary, they remain forever unsubdued; so that austerities, however severe, will not conquer the senses. To destroy their power, the most effectual means is, in general, to deny them firmly what will please, to give them every thing that disgusts; and to persevere in this, until they are reduced to be without appetite or repugnance. But if we attempt, during the warfare, to grant them any relaxation, we act like those, who, under pretext of strengthening a man, who was condemned to be starved to death, should give him from time to time a little nourishment, which indeed would prolong his torments, and postpone his death.

It is just the same with the death of the senses, the powers, the understanding, and self will; for if we do not eradicate every remains of self subsisting in these, we support them in a dying life to the end. This state and its termination, are clearly set forth by St. Paul. He speaks of *bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus.* (2 Cor. iv. 10.) but, lest we should rest here, he fully distinguishes this, from the state
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of being dead, and having our life hid with Christ in God.—It is only by a total death to self we can be lost in God.

HE who is thus dead has no farther need of mortification ; for the very end of mortification is accomplished in him, and all is become new. It is an unhappy error in those good souls, who have arrived at a conquest of the bodily senses, thro' this unremitted and continual mortification, that they should still continue attached to the exercise of it ; they should rather drop their attention thereto, and remain in indifference, accepting with equality, the good as the bad, the sweet as the bitter, and bend their whole attention, to a labour of greater importance ; namely, the mortification of the *mind* and *self-will*, beginning by dropping all the activity of self, which can never be done without the most profound prayer ; no more than the death of the senses can be perfected, without profound recollection joined to mortification ; and indeed recollection is the chief means, whereby we attain to a conquest of the senses, as it detaches and separates us from them, and sweetly saps the very cause from whence they derive their influence over us.

THE more thou didst augment my love, and my patience, O my Lord, the less respite had I from the most oppressive crosses : But love rendered them easy to bear.—O ye poor souls, who exhausted yourselves with needless vexation, if you would but seek God in your hearts, there would be a speedy period to all your troubles ; for the encrease of crosses would proportionably encrease your delight.

LOVE

LOVE, at the beginning, athirst for mortification impelled me to seek and invent various kinds, and it is surprizing, that as soon as the bitterness of any new mode of mortification was exhausted, another kind was pointed to me, and I was inwardly led to pursue it. Divine Love so enlightened my heart, and so scrutinized into its secret springs, that the smallest defects became exposed. If I was about to speak, something wrong was instantly pointed to me, and I was compelled to silence : if I kept silence, faults herein were presently discovered,—in every action there was something defective, in my mortifications, my penances, my alms-givings, my retirement, I was faulty. When I walked, I observed there was something wrong ; if I spoke any way in my own favour, I saw pride.—If I said within myself, alas, I will speak no more, here was *self*. If I was cheerful and open I was condemned ;—this pure Love found always matter for reproof in me, and was jealous that nothing should escape unnoticed. It was not that I was particularly attentive over myself, for it was even with constraint I could look at all at myself ; as my attention towards God, by an attachment of my will to his, was without intermission, I waited continually upon him, and he watched incessantly over me, and he led me by his providence, that I forgot all things ; I knew not how to communicate what I felt to any one. I was so lost to myself that I could scarcely go about self-examination ; when I attempted it all ideas of myself immediately disappeared, and I found myself occupied with my ONE OBJECT, without distinction of ideas : I was absorbed in peace inexpressible ; I saw by the eye of faith that it was God that thus wholly possessed

possessed me; but I did not reason at all about it.

It must not however be supposed that Divine Love suffered my faults to go unpunished. O GOD! with what rigour dost thou punish the most faithful, the most loving and beloved of thy children. I mean not externally, for this would be inadequate to the smallest fault, in a soul that GOD is about to purify radically; and the punishments it can inflict on itself, are rather gratifications and refreshments than otherwise. Indeed the manner in which he corrects his chosen, must be felt, or it is impossible to conceive how dreadful it is; and in my attempt to explain it, I shall be unintelligible, except to experienced souls. It is an internal burning, a secret fire, sent from GOD to purge away the fault, giving extreme pain, until this purification is effected. It is like a dislocated joint, which is in incessant torment, until the bone is replaced. This pain is so severe, that the soul would do any thing to satisfy GOD for the fault, and would rather be torn in pieces than endure the torment. Sometimes she flies to others, and opens her state that she may find consolation, but thereby she frustrates GOD's designs towards her. It is of the utmost consequence to know what use to make of the distress, as the whole of one's spiritual advancement depends thereon. We should at these seasons of internal anguish, obscurity and mourning, co-operate with GOD, and endure this consuming torture in its utmost extent (whilst it continues) without attempting to lessen or encrease it; but bear it passively, nor seek to satisfy GOD by any thing we can do of ourselves. To continue

ne passive at such a time is extremely difficult, and requires great firmness and courage: I knew some, who being defective herein, never advanced farther in the spiritual process, because they grew impatient under the pain, and quickly sought some means of consolation. But my Lord taught me to seek no redress, until he had, as it were, fully avenged himself. Oh how lovely, how rigidly just and pityless, yet how sweet are his dealings to his Beloved! I have endured this torment, not only many hours, but days, in proportion to the nature of my fault; a hasty word, an unguarded look, was punished with severity; and I saw clearly, that had I attempted to put my own hand to the work, under pretence of supporting the ark, I should have been punished like *Uzza*. Indeed it was inexpressibly difficult, to lie passive under these crucifying operations of the divine spirit.

C H A P. XII.

THE treatment of my Husband and Mother-in law, however rigorous and insulting, I now bore silently,—and made them no replies, and this was not so difficult for me; because the greatness of my interior occupation, and what passed within, rendered me insensible to all the rest; yet there were times when I was left to myself: And then I could not refrain from tears, when they fell violently on me. I did the lowest offices for them, to humble myself; preventing such as has been used to do them: Yet all this did not win their favour. When they were in a rage, tho' I could not find that I had given them any occasion for it; yet I did not fail to beg their pardon, and even from the girl I have spoken of. I had a good deal of pain to surmount myself, as to the last; because she became the more insolent for it; reproaching me with things which ought to have made her blush, and to have covered her with shame. As she saw that I contradicted and resisted her no more in any thing, she proceeded to treat me still worse: And when I asked her pardon, for the very offences which she had given me, she triumphed, saying, “I knew very well I was in the right.” Her arrogance rose to that height, that I would not have treated the meanest servant, or vassal, as she treated me.

ONE day, as she was dressing me, she pulled me very roughly, and spoke to me very insolently. I said to her, “It is not on my account that I am willing to answer you, for what you do gives me no pain, but lest you should act thus before

“ before persons to whom it would give offence :
“ Moreover, as I am your Mistress, God is as-
“ suredly offended therewith.” She left me that moment, and ran like a mad woman to meet my husband, telling him, “ she would stay no longer, I treated her so ill, and that I hated her for the care she took of him in his indispositions, which were continual, wanting her not to do any service for him.” As my husband was very hasty, he took fire at these words. I finished the dressing of myself alone, since she had left me, and durst not call another girl ; for she would not suffer another girl to come near me. All on a sudden, I saw my husband coming like a Lion, for he never was in such a transport as this. I thought he was going to strike me ; I expected the blow with tranquillity ; he threatened me with his lifted crutch ; I thought he was going to knock me down with it ; and holding myself closely united to God, I beheld it without pain. However he did not strike me, for he had presence of mind enough to see what an indignity it would be ; but in his rage he threw it at me. It fell near me, but did not touch me ; after which he discharged himself in such language, as if I had been a street beggar, or the most infamous of all creatures. I kept a profound silence, being recollected in God, to suffer for his love all these things. The girl in the mean time comes in. At the sight of her his rage redoubles. I kept near to God, as a victim disposed to suffer whatever he would permit ; when my husband ordered me to beg her pardon, which I readily did, and thereby appeased him. I went presently into my dear closet, where I no sooner was, than my divine Director impelled me to make this girl a present, to recompense her for the cross which she had caused

caused me, which I did. She was a little astonished, but her heart was too hard to be gained:

I OFTEN acted thus, for she very frequently gave me such opportunities. She had a singular dexterity in attending the sick, and my husband was so almost continually : from hence none but her would be suffered to touch him. For this reason he had a very great regard for her. Moreover, she was so artful that before him she affected an extraordinary respect for me ; but when he was not present, if I said a word to her, though with the greatest mildness ; if she heard him coming, she cried out with all her might, that she was unhappy ; and acted the distressed in such a manner, that, without informing himself of the truth, he was irritated against me, as was my mother-in-law too.

THE violence I did to my proud and hasty nature was so great, that I could hold out no longer. I was quite spent with it. It seemed sometimes as if I was inwardly rent, and I have often fallen sick with the struggle. She did not forbear exclaiming against me, even before persons of distinction, who came to see me. If I was silent, she took offence at that yet more, and said, " I despised her." She cry'd me down, and made complaints of me to every body : But all this redounded to my honour and her own disgrace : My reputation was so well established, on account of my exterior modesty, my devotion, and the great acts of charity which I did, that nothing could shake it.

SOMETIMES she ran out into the very street, crying out against me. One time she exclaimed,
" Am

"Am not I very unhappy to have such a mistress?" People gathered about her to know what I had done to her; and not knowing what to say, she answered, "I had not spoken to her all the day." They returned, laughing, and said, "She has done you no great harm then."

I am surprized at the blindness of confessors, and at their permitting their penitents to conceal so much of the truth from them—for the confessor of this girl made her pass for a saint. This he said in my hearing. I answered nothing; for Love would not admit me speaking of my troubles; but that I should consecrate them all to him by a profound silence.

My husband was out of humour with my devotion, it became insupportable to him, "what says he, you love God so much, that you love me no longer;" so little did he comprehend that the true conjugal love is that which God himself forms in the heart that loves him. Oh, thou who art pure and holy, thou imprinted in me from the first such a love of chastity, that there was nothing in the world which I would not have undergone to possess and preserve it. I endeavoured not to be disagreeable to my husband in any thing, and to please him in every thing he could require of me. God gave me such a purity of soul at that time, that I had not so much as a bad thought. Sometimes my husband said to me, "One sees plainly that you never lose the presence of God."

THE world, seeing I quitted it, persecuted and turned me into ridicule. I was its entertainment, and the subject of its fables. It could not bear

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that

that a woman, who was scarce twenty years of age, should thus make war against it, and overcome. My mother-in-law took part with the world, and blamed me for not doing many things, that in her heart she would have been highly offended had I done them. I was as one lost, and all alone: So little commerce had I with the creatures, farther than necessity required. I seemed to experience literally those words of St. PAUL, "I live, yet, no more I, but CHRIST liveth in me;" for he was become the soul of my soul, and the life of my life. His operations were so powerful, so sweet, and so secret, all together, that I could not express them. We went into the country about some business. Oh! What unutterable communications did I there experience in retirement!

I WAS insatiable for prayer, I arose at four o'clock in the morning to pray. I went very far to the church, which was so situated that the coach could not come to it. There was a steep hill to go down and another to ascend. All that cost me nothing: I had such a longing desire to meet with God, as my only good, who on his part was graciously forward to give himself to his poor creature, and for it to do even visible miracles. Such as saw me lead a life so very different from the women of the world, said I was a fool. They attributed it to stupidity. Sometimes they said, "What can all this mean?" "Some people think this lady has parts, but no thing of them appears." For if I went into company, often I could not speak; so much was I engaged within, so inward with the Lord, as not to attend to any thing else: If any near me spoke,

spoke, I heard nothing of what they said. I generally took one with me, that this might not appear. I took some work, to hide under that appearance, the real employ of my heart. When I was alone, the work dropped out of my hands: and I could do nothing else but resign myself to be wholly taken up with love. I wanted to persuade a relation of my husband's to practise prayer. She thought me a fool, for depriving myself of all the amusements of the age: But the Lord has since opened her eyes, to make her despise them. I could have wished to teach all the world to love God; and thought it depended only on them to feel what I felt. God made use of my thinking thus, to gain many souls to himself.

THE good father I have spoken of, who was the instrument of my conversion, brought me acquainted with GENEVIEVE GRANGER, prioress of the Benedictines, one of the greatest servants of God of her time. She proved of very great service to me, as in the sequel will appear. My confessor, who had told every one that I was a saint before, when so full of miseries, and so far from the condition to which God in his mercy had now brought me, seeing I placed a confidence in the Father of whom I have spoken, and that I steered in a road which was unknown to him, declared openly against me: And the monks of his order persecuted me much. They even preached publicly against me, as a person under a delusion.

My husband and mother-in-law, who till now had been indifferent about this confessor, then joined him and ordered me to leave off prayer,
and

and the exercise of piety ; but that I could not do. Even when I was in company, God seized my heart more powerfully. There was carried on a conversation within me, very different from that which passed without. I did what I could to hinder it from appearing, but could not. The presence of so great a Master manifested itself, even on my countenance : And that pained my husband, as he sometimes told me. I did what I could to hinder it from being noticed, but was not able completely to hide it. I was so much inwardly occupied that I knew not what I eat. I made as if I eat some kinds of meat, though I did not take any, and acted so dexterously that they did not perceive it. This deep inward attention suffered me scarcely to see or hear any thing.—I still continued to use many severe mortifications and austerities,—Yet they did not in the least diminish the freshness of my countenance.

I HAD often grievous fits of sickness and no consolation in life, but in the practice of prayer, and in seeing Mother GRANGER. How dear did these cost me, especially the former ! But what do I say : Oh my Love.—Is this esteeming the cross as I ought, should I not rather say that prayer to me was recompensed *with the cross*, and the cross *with prayer*. Oh ye inseparable gifts, united in my heart and life ! When your eternal light arose in my soul, how perfectly it reconciled me, and made ye the object of my love ! from the moment I received thee I have never been free from the cross, nor it seems without prayer—though for a long time I thought myself deprived thereof which exceedingly augmented my afflictions.

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My confessor at first exerted his efforts to hinder me from practising prayer, and from seeing Mother GRANGER. And, he violently stirred up my husband and mother-in-law to hinder me from praying: The method they took to effect it was, to watch me from morning till night. I durst not go out from my mother-in-law's chamber, or from my husband's bed-side. Sometimes I carried my work to the window, under a pretence of seeing better, in order to relieve myself with some moments repose; but they came to watch me very closely, to see if I did not pray instead of working. When my husband and mother-in-law played at cards, if I did but turn towards the fire, they watched to see if I continued my work or shut my eyes; if they observed I closed them, they would be in a fury against me for several hours: But what is most strange, when my husband went abroad, having some days of health, he would not allow me to pray in his absence. He marked my work, and sometimes, after he was just gone out, returning immediately, if he found me in my closet, he would be in a rage. In vain I said to him, "Surely, Sir, what matters it what I do when you are absent, if I be assiduous in attending you when you are present?" That would not satisfy him; he insisted upon it that I should no more pray in his absence than his presence.

I BELIEVE there is hardly a torment equal to that of being ardently drawn to retirement, and not having it in one's power to be retired: But, oh my God, the war they raised, to hinder me from loving thee, did but augment my love; and while they were striving to prevent my addresses to thee,
thou

thou drewest me into an inexpressible silence ; and the more they laboured to separate me from thee, the more closely didst thou unite me to thyself ; The flame of thy love was kindled, and kept up, by every thing that was done to extinguish it.

OFTEN through compliance I played at piquet with my husband, and at such times was even more interiorly attracted than if I had been at church. I was scarce able to contain the fire which burned in my soul, which had all the fervor of what men call love, but nothing of its impetuosity ; for the more ardent, the more peaceable it was. This fire gained strength from every thing that was done to suppress it : And the spirit of prayer was nourished and increased, from their contrivances and endeavours, to disallow me any time for practising it. I loved, without considering of a motive, or reason for loving ; for nothing passed in my head, but much in the innermost of my soul. I thought not about any recompence, gift, or favour, which he could bestow or I receive. The Well-beloved was himself the only object, which attracted my heart. I could not contemplate his attributes. I knew nothing else, but to *love* and to *suffer*. Oh, ignorance more truly learned than any science of the Doctors, since it taught me so well JESUS CHRIST crucified, and brought me to be in love with his holy Cross. I could then have wished to die, in order to be inseparably united, to him who so powerfully attracted my heart. As all this passed in the will, the imagination and the understanding being absorbed in it, in an union of enjoyment, I knew not what to say, having never read or heard of such a state as I experienced ; I dreaded delusion
and

and feared all was not right, for before this I had known nothing of the operations of God in souls. I had only read St. *Francis de Sales*, *Thomas a Kempis*, the *Spiritual Combat*, and the holy Scriptures; I was quite a stranger to those interior and spiritual books wherein such states are described.

THEN all those amusements and pleasures that are so prized and esteemed, appeared to me dull and insipid, so that I wondered how it could be that I had ever enjoyed them.—And indeed since that time, I could never find any satisfaction or enjoyment out of God, although I have sometimes been unfaithful enough to endeavour it.—I was not astonished that Martyrs gave their lives for JESUS CHRIST. I thought them happy, and sighed after their privilege of suffering for him—for I so esteemed the cross that my greatest trouble was, the want of suffering as much as my heart thirsted for.

THIS respect and esteem for the cross continually increased, and although afterwards, I lost the sensible relish and enjoyment thereof, yet the love and esteem has never quitted me no more than the cross itself.—Indeed it has ever been my faithful companion, changing and augmenting, in proportion to the changes and disposition of my inward state. Oh blessed Cross, thou hast never quitted me, since I surrendered myself to my divine *crucified* master, and I still hope that thou wilt never abandon me.—So eager was I for the cross, that I endeavoured to make myself feel the utmost rigour of every mortification—and felt them to the quick: Yet this only served to awaken my desire of suffering, and to shew me that it is God alone, that
can

can prepare and send crosses suitable to a soul that thirsts for a *following of his sufferings, and a conformity of his death.* The more my state of prayer augmented, my desire of suffering grew stronger, and the full weight of heavy crosses from every side came thundering upon me.

THE peculiar property of this prayer of the heart is to give a strong faith. Mine was without limits, as was also my resignation to God, and my confidence in him, my love of his will, and of the orders of his providence over me. I was very timorous before, but now feared nothing. It is in such a case that one feels the efficacy of these words of the gospel, *My yoke is easy, and my burden is light.* Matt. xi. 30.

C H A P. XIII.

I HAD a secret desire given me from that time to be wholly devoted to the disposal of my God, let that be what it would. I said, "What couldst thou demand of me, that I would not willingly sacrifice or offer thee? Oh, spare me not." The cross and humiliations were represented to my mind, in the most frightful colours—but this deterred me not; I yielded myself up as a willing victim, and indeed our Lord seemed to accept of my sacrifice, for his divine providence furnished me incessantly with occasions and opportunities for putting it to the test.

I could scarce hear God or our Lord Jesus Christ spoken of, without being almost transported out of myself. What surprised me the most was, the great difficulty I had to say the vocal prayers I had been used to repeat. As soon as I opened my lips to pronounce them, the love of God seized me so strongly, that I was swallowed up in a profound silence, and an inexpressible peace. I made fresh attempts but still in vain. I began, again and again but could not go on. And as I had never before heard of such a state, I knew not what to do. My inability still increased, because my love to God was still growing more strong, more violent and more overpowering. There was made in me, without the sound of words, a continual prayer, which seemed to me to be the prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ himself; a prayer of the Word, which is made by the Spirit, that according to St. PAUL, *asketh for us that which is good, perfect,*
and

*and conformable to the Will of God. Rom. viii.
26. 27.*

My domestick crosses continued—I was deprived of seeing or even writing to Mrs. Granger, my ~~very~~ going to divine service or the blessed sacrament, were a source of woeful offences, and the only amusement I had left me, was the visiting and attending the poor sick and sore, and performing the lowest offices for them.

BUT now my prayer-time began to be exceeding distressful, I compelled myself to continue at it, tho' deprived of all comfort and consolation, and yet when I was not employed therein, I felt an ardent desire and longing for it.—I suffered inexpressible anguish in my mind, and endeavoured with the severest inflictions of corporal austerities to mitigate and divert it—but in vain, the dryness and barrenness still increased, I found no more that enlivening vigour which had hitherto carried me on in the paths of virtue with great swiftness. My passions (which were not yet thoroughly mortified) revived, and caused me new conflicts. I seemed to myself to be like those young brides, who find a great deal of difficulty to lay aside their *self-love*, and follow their husbands to the war. I relapsed into a vain complacency and fondness for myself. My propensity to pride and vanity, which seemed quite dead, while I was so filled with the love of God, now shewed itself again, and gave me severe exercise; which made me lament the exterior beauty of my person, and pray to God incessantly, that he would remove from me that obstacle, and make me ugly. I could even have wished to be deaf, blind and dumb, that nothing might divert me from my love of God.

I SET

I SET out on a journey, which we had then to make, and here I appeared more than ever like those lamps, which emit a new glimmering flash, when they are just on the point of extinguishing. Alas! how many snares were laid in my way! I met them at every step. I even committed infidelities through unwatchfulness. But, oh my GOD, with what rigour didst thou punish them! a useless glance was checked as a sin. How many tears did those inadvertent faults cost me which I fell into, through a weak compliance, and even against my will! Thou knowest, oh my Love, that thy rigour, exercised after my slips, ~~was~~ not the motive of those tears which I shed. With what pleasure would I have suffered the most rigorous severity to have been cured of my infidelity; and to what severe chastisement did I not condemn myself! Sometimes thou treated me like a father who pities the child, and caresses it after its involuntary faults. How often didst thou make me sensible of thy love towards me, notwithstanding my blemishes. It was the sweetness of this love after my falls which caused my greatest pain; for the more the amiableness of thy love was extended to me, the more inconsolable I was for having departed ever so little from thee. When I had let some inadvertence escape me, I found thee ready to receive me: And I have often cried out, "Oh my GOD! is it possible that thou canst be so gracious to such an offender, and so indulgent to my faults; so propitious to one who has wandered astray from thee, by vain compliances, and an unworthy fondness for frivolous objects? And yet no sooner do I return, than I find thee waiting, with open arms ready to receive me after all."

O SINNER,

O SINNER, sinner! Hast thou any reason to complain of GOD? Ah, if there yet remains any justice in thee, confess the truth, and own that it is owing to thyself if thou goest wrong; that in departing from him thou disobeyest his call; and that, after all this, when thou returnest, he is ready to receive thee; and if thou returnest not, he makes use of the most engaging and prevalent motives to win thee thereto: Yet thou turnest a deaf ear to his voice; thou wilt not hear him. Thou sayest he speaks not to thee, though he calls loudly. It is therefore only because thou daily rebellest, and art growing daily more and more deaf to *the voice of the charmer*. Oh my love, I am sure thou didst never cease to speak to my heart, and wast always ready to succour me in the time of necessity.

WHEN I was at *Paris*, and the Clergy saw me so young, they appeared astonished. Those to whom I opened my state told me, "that I could never enough thank GOD for the graces conferred on me; that if I knew them I should be amazed at them; and that if I were not faithful, I should be the most ungrateful of all creatures." Some declared that they never knew any woman whom GOD held so closely, and in so great a purity of conscience. I believe what rendered it so was the continual care thou hadst over me, oh my GOD, making me feel thy intimate presence, even as thou hast promised it to us in thy gospel. "*If a man love me, my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*" John xiv. 23. The continual experience of thy presence in me was what preserved me. I became deeply assured of what the prophet hath said, "*Except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh*

“*waketh but in vain.*” Psa. cxxvii. 1. Thou, oh my Love, wast my faithful keeper, who didst continually defend my heart against all sorts of enemies, preventing the least faults, or correcting them when vivacity had occasioned their being committed. But alas! my dear Love, when thou ceased to watch for me, or left me to myself, how weak was I, and how easily did my enemies prevail over me! Let others ascribe their victories to their own fidelity. As for me, I shall never attribute them to any thing else than thy paternal care over me. I have too often experienced, to my cost, what I should be without thee, to presume in the least on any cares of my own. It is to thee, and to thee only, that I owe every thing, oh my deliverer; and my being indebted to thee for it gives me infinite joy.

WHILE I was at *Paris*, I relaxed in my usual exercises, on account of the little time I had, and the dryness and distress which had seized my heart, the hand which sustained me being hid, and my beloved withdrawn. I did many things which I should not; for I knew the extreme fondness which some had for me, and suffered them to express it without checking it as I ought. I fell into other faults too, as having my neck a little too bare, though not near so much as others had. I wept bitterly because I plainly saw I was too remiss; and that was my torment. I sought all about for him who had secretly inflamed my heart. I enquired for tidings of him. But alas! hardly any body knew him. I cried, “Oh thou
 “best beloved of my soul! hadst thou been near
 “me these disasters had not befallen me. Tell
 “me where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock
 “to rest at noon, in the bright day of eternity,
 “which

“ which is not, like the day of time, subject to “ night and eclipses?” When I say, that I spoke thus to him it is but to explain myself. In reality it all passed almost in silence, for I could not speak. My heart had a language which was carried on without the sound of words, understood of its well-beloved, as he understands the language of the WORD ever eloquent, which speaks incessantly in the innermost of the soul. Oh sacred language! which experience only gives the comprehension of! Let not any think it a barren language, an effect of the mere imagination. Far different, it is the silent expression of the Word in the soul. As he never ceases to speak, so he never ceases to operate. *Dixit & facta sunt.* He effects in the soul what he speaks in it. This is a substantial expressive word, which operates infinitely more than all that one can conceive: It continues for ever fixed and unchangeable, a word which is comprehended of him, in whom it is spoken, only by its effects. This ineffable word communicates to the soul, in which it resides, a facility of speaking without words; the language of the blessed in heaven; well understood among congenial spirits, even without the medium of words, diffusing among them the union of grace, peace, and sweetness; and productive of such benefits as nothing but experience can declare. Oh if souls were pure enough, they would thus participate before hand the language of heaven.

BUT this no creature can procure of itself; for its silence, being only from its own efforts, would not have the effect of the grace which I am speaking of, not having the same principle. If people once
came

came to know the operations of God, in souls wholly resigned to his guiding, it would fill them with reverential admiration and awe.

To return to my subject, from which I have departed, to follow the impetuosity of the spirit which makes me write, which will be likely to happen to me sometimes; (wherefore, sir, I beg you to excuse the irregularity of this history which you have required of me, not being in a condition to write otherwise.)

As I saw that the purity of my state was like to be sullied by too great a commerce with the creatures, I made haste to finish what detained me at *Paris*, in order to return to the country. 'Tis true, Oh my God, I felt that thou hadst given me strength enough to avoid the Occasions of Evil—but when I had so far yielded as to get into them, I found I could not resist the vain complaisances, and a number of other foibles which they ensnared me into. The pain which I felt after my faults was inexpressible, it was not an anguish that arose from any distinct idea or conception, from any particular motive or affection—but a kind of devouring fire which ceased not, till the fault was consumed and the soul purified by it.—It was a banishment of my soul from the presence of its beloved, its bridegroom. I could have no access to him, neither could I have any rest out of him, I knew not what to do. I was like the dove out of the ark, which finding no rest for the sole of her foot, was constrained to return to the ark; but, finding the window shut, could only fly about and about it. In the mean time, through an infidelity which will for ever
render

render me culpable, I strove to find some satisfactions without, but could not. This essay served to convince me of my folly, and of the vanity of those pleasures which are called innocent. When I was prevailed on to taste them, I felt a strong repulse, which, joined with my remorse for the transgression, changed the diversion into torment. "Oh my God! said I, this is not thee; and no-
" thing else, beside thee, can give solid pleasure."

ONE day, as much through unfaithfulness as complaisance, I went to take a turn at some of the publick walks, rather from excess of vanity to shew myself there, than to take the pleasure of the place. Oh my God! How didst thou make me sensible of this fault? But far from punishing me in letting me partake of the amusement, thou didst it in holding me so close to thyself, that I could give no attention to any thing but my fault and thy displeasure. After this I was invited with some other Ladies to an entertainment at *St. Cloud*, through vanity and weak compliance, I yielded and went. The regale was very magnificent; they, though wise in the eye of the world, could relish it; but as to me it was filled with bitterness. I could eat nothing, I could enjoy nothing, my disquiet appeared on my countenance. Oh, what tears did it cost me! For above three months my Beloved withdrew his favouring presence, and I could see nothing but an angry God for me.

I WAS on this occasion, and in another journey which I took with my husband into *Touraine*, before I fell into the small-pox, like those animals destined for slaughter, which on certain days they adorn with greens and flowers, and bring in pomp
into

into the city, before they kill them; this weak beauty, on the eve of its decline, shone forth in new brightness, in order to become the sooner extinct.

ONE day as I walked to church, followed by a footman—in crossing a bridge I was met by a poor man; I went to give him alms, he thanked me but refused them, and then spoke to me in a wonderful manner of God and divine things; he displayed to me my whole heart—my love to God, my Charity, my too great fondness for my beauty, and all my faults; he told me 'twas not enough to avoid hell, but that God required of me the utmost purity and height of perfection.—My heart assented to his reproofs—I heard him with silence and respect—his words penetrated my very soul, when I arrived at Church I fainted away; but have never seen the man since.

C H A P. XIV.

AFTER this, my husband enjoying some intermission of his almost continual ailments, had a mind to go to *Orleans*, and from thence into *Touraine*. In this journey my vanity made its last blaze. I received abundance of visits and applauses. But how clearly did I perceive the folly of men who are so taken with vain beauty! I disliked the passion, yet not that in myself which caused it, though I sometimes ardently desired to be delivered from it. The continual combat of nature and grace cost me no small affliction. Nature was pleased with public applause; but grace made me dread it. What augmented the temptation was, that they esteemed in me virtue, joined with youth and beauty; not knowing that all the virtue was only in God, and his protection, and all the weakness in myself.

I WENT in search of confessors, to accuse myself of my failings, and to bewail my backslidings: But they were utterly insensible of my pain. They esteemed what God condemned. They treated as a virtue what to me appeared detestable in thy sight. Far from measuring my faults by thy graces, they only considered what I was, in comparison of what I might have been: Hence, instead of blaming me, they only flattered my pride, and justified me in what incurred thy rebuke; or only treated as a slight fault what in me was highly displeasing to thee, from whom I had received such signal mercies.

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THE heinousness of sins is not to be measured singly by their nature, but also by the state of the person who commits them; as the least unfaithfulness in a spouse is more injurious to her husband, than far greater ones in his domestics. I told them all the trouble I had been under, for not having entirely covered my neck; though it was covered much more than by other women of my age. They assured me that I was very modestly dressed; and as my husband liked my dress, there could be nothing amiss in it. My inward director taught me quite the contrary; but I had not courage enough to follow him, and to dress myself differently from others, at my age. Beside, my vanity furnished me with pretences seemingly just, for following the mode. Oh, if Pastors knew what hurt they do in humouring female vanity, they would be more severe against it. Had I but found one honest enough to deal plainly with me, I should not have gone on thus; no, not for a moment. But my vanity, siding with the declared opinion of others, induced me to think them in the right, and my own scruples to be only mere fancy.

WE met with accidents in this journey, sufficient to have terrified any one, and though corrupt nature prevailed so far as I have just mentioned, yet my resignation to God was so strong, that I passed fearless, even where there was apparently no possibility of escape. At one time we got into a narrow pass, and did not perceive, until we were too far advanced to draw back, that the road was undermined by the river *Loire*, which ran beneath, and the banks had fallen in; so that in some places the footmen were obliged to support

port one side of the carriage. All around me were terrified to the highest degree, yet GOD kept me perfectly tranquil, and I secretly rejoiced in the prospect of losing my life by a singular stroke of his providence. During this journey, I sometimes was faulty in indulging my sight with rare and curious objects.

ON my return, I went to see Mrs. GRANGER, to whom I related how it had been with me while abroad. She strengthened and encouraged me to pursue my first design, and she advised me to cover my neck entirely, which I have done ever since, notwithstanding the singularity of it.

GOD who had so long deferred the chastisement merited by such a series of infidelity, now began to punish me with double rigour for the abuse of his grace. Sometimes I wished to retire to a convent, and thought it lawful, as I judged it impossible to correspond so fully with the divine operations, whilst engaged in worldly matters. I found wherein I was weak, and that my faults were always of the same nature; it was therefore I sought so ardently to shun the occasion. I wished to hide myself in some cave, or to be confined in a dreary prison, rather than enjoy a liberty by which I suffered so much. Divine Love gently drew me inward, and vanity dragged me outward, and my heart was rent asunder by the contest, as I neither gave myself wholly up to the one or the other.

I BESOUGHT my GOD to deprive me of power to displease him, and cried,—Art thou not strong enough wholly to eradicate this unjust duplicity
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out of me!—For my vanity broke forth when occasions offered; yet I quickly returned to God, and he instead of repulsing or upbraiding me, often received me with open arms, and gave me fresh testimonials of his love, which filled me with the most anguishing reflections on my offence; for though this wretched vanity was still so prevalent, yet my love to God was such, that after my wanderings, I would rather have chosen his rod than his caresses. His interests, so to speak, were more dear to me than my own, and I wished he would have done himself justice upon me. My heart was full of grief and of love, and I was stung to the quick for offending him, who showered his grace so profusely upon me. That those who know not God should offend him by sin is not to be wondered at, but that a heart which loved him more than itself, and so fully experienced his love, that this heart should be seduced by propensities which it detests, is a most cruel martyrdom, rendered inexpressibly afflicting by its long continuance.

WHEN I felt most strongly thy presence, and thy love, oh my God, said I, how wonderfully thou bestowest thy favours on such a wretched creature, who requites thee only with ingratitude. For if any one reads this life with attention, he will see on God's part, nothing but goodness, mercy, and love; and on my part, nothing but weakness, sin, and infidelity. If there be any thing that is good, it is thine, O my God! As for me I have nothing to glory in but my infirmities and my unworthiness, since, in that everlasting marriage-union thou hast made with me, I brought with me nothing but weakness, sin and misery. Oh my
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my Love! How I rejoice to owe all to thee, and that thou favourest my heart with a sight of the treasures and boundless riches of thy grace and love! Thou hast dealt by me, as if a magnificent king should marry a poor slave, forget her slavery, give her all the ornaments which may render her pleasing in his eyes, and freely pardon her all the faults and ill qualities which her ignorance and bad education had given her. This thou hast made my case, My poverty is become my riches, and in the extremity of my weakness I have found my strength. Oh if any knew, with what confusion the indulgent favours of God cover the soul after its faults!—'tis inconceivable! Such a soul would wish with all its power, to satisfy the divine justice, —I made verses and little songs to bewail myself. I exercised austerities, but they did not satisfy my heart. They were like those drops of water which only serve to make the fire hotter. When I take a view of God, and myself, I am obliged to cry out, “Oh admirable conduct of Love toward an “ungrateful wretch! Oh horrible ingratitude toward such unparalleled goodness!” A great part of my life is only a mixture of such things as might be enough to sink me to the grave betwixt grief and love!

C H A P. XV.

ON my arrival at home, I found my husband seized with the gout, and his other complaints; my little daughter ill, and like to die of the small-pox; my eldest son too, took it, and had such a vast quantity, and of so malignant a nature, that it rendered him as disfigured, as before he had been beautiful. As soon as I perceived the small-pox was in the house, I had no doubt but I should take it. Mrs. GRANGER advised me timely to remove, if I could. My father offered to take me home, with my second son, whom I tenderly loved. But my mother-in-law would not suffer it. She persuaded my husband it was useless, and sent for a physician, who seconded her in it, saying, "I should as readily take it at a distance as here, if I were disposed to take it." I may say, she proved at that time a second *Jephtha*, and that she sacrificed us both, though innocently. Had she known what followed, I doubt not but she would have acted otherwise. All the town stirred in this affair. Every one begged her to send me out of the house, and cried out that it was cruel to expose me thus. They set upon me too, imagining I was unwilling to go; for I had not told that she was so averse to it. I had at that time no other disposition, than to sacrifice myself to divine Providence; and though I might have removed, notwithstanding my mother's resistance, yet I would not without her consent; because it looked to me, as if her resistance was an order of Heaven. Oh divine will of my God! Thou wast then

then my only life, in the midst of all my miseries.

I CONTINUED in this spirit of sacrifice to God, waiting from moment to moment in an entire resignation, for whatever he should be pleased to ordain. I cannot express what nature suffered; for I was like one who sees both certain death and an easy remedy, without being able to avoid the former, or try the latter. I had no less apprehension for my younger son than for myself: My mother-in-law so excessively doated on the eldest, that the rest of us were indifferent to her: Yet I am assured, if she had known that the younger would have died of the small-pox, she would not have acted as she did. God makes use of creatures, and their natural inclinations, to accomplish his designs. When I see in the creatures a conduct which appears unreasonable and mortifying, I mount higher, and look upon them as instruments both of the justice and mercy of God; for his justice is full of mercy.

WHEN I told my husband that my stomach was sick, and that I was taking the small-pox; he said, it was only imagination. I let Mrs. GRANGER know the situation I was in. As she had a tender heart, she was affected by the treatment I met with, and encouraged me to offer myself up to the LORD. At length, nature finding there was no resource, consented to the sacrifice which my spirit had already made. The disorder gained ground apace, I was seized with a great shivering, and a pain both in my head and stomach. They would not yet believe that I was sick, but in a few hours it went so far, that

that they thought my life in danger ; for I was also taken with an inflammation on my lungs, and the remedies for the one disorder were contrary to the other. My mother-in-law's favourite physician was not in town, nor the resident surgeon. Another surgeon was sent for, who said, " I must be bled ;" but my mother-in-law would not suffer it at that time to be done. So little attendance was paid me, that I was on the point of death for want of proper assistance. My husband, not being able to see me, left me entirely to his mother. She would not allow any physician but her own to prescribe for me, and yet did not send for him, though he was within a day's journey of us. In this extremity I opened not my mouth to request any succour. I looked for life or death from the hand of God, without testifying the least uneasiness, at such extraordinary conduct. The peace I enjoyed within, on account of that perfect resignation, in which God kept me by his grace, was so great, that it made me forget myself, in the midst of such violent and oppressive disorders.

BUT God's protection was indeed wonderful. How oft have I been reduced to extremity, yet he never failed to succour, when things appeared most desperate. It pleased him so to order it, that a skilful surgeon, who had attended me before, passing by our house, enquired after me. They told him I was extremely ill. He alighted immediately, and came in to see me. Never was man more surprized, when he saw the frightful condition I was in. The small-pox, which could not come out, had fallen on my nose with such force, that it was quite

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quite black. He thought there had been a gangrene in it, and that it was going to fall off. My eyes were like two coals; but I was no ways alarmed; for at that time, I could have made a sacrifice of all things, and was pleased that God should avenge himself, on that face, which had betrayed me into so many infidelities. He was so affrighted that he could not hide his surprize, and went into my mother-in-law's chamber, and told her, "it was most shameful to let me die in that manner, for want of bleeding." She still opposed it so violently, that in short she told him flatly, "she would not suffer it, until the physician returned." He flew into such a rage, at seeing me thus left without sending for the physician, that he reproved my mother-in-law in the severest manner; but all in vain still. Upon that he came up again presently into my chamber, and said, "If you choose, I will bleed you, and save your life." I held out my arm to him; and, though it was extremely swelled, he bled me in an instant. My mother-in-law was in a violent passion about it. The small-pox came out immediately; and he ordered that they should get me bled again in the evening, but she would not suffer it, and for fear of displeasing my mother-in-law, and through a total resignation of myself into the hands of God, I durst not retain him, whatever occasion I had for it.

I AM the more particular in this relation, to shew how advantageous it is to resign one's self to God without reserve. Though in appearance he leaves us for a time, to prove and exercise our faith, yet he never fails us, when our need
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of him is the more pressing : One may say with the Scripture, " It is God who bringeth down to " the gates of death, and raiseth up again." The blackness and swelling of my nose went off, and I believe, had they continued to bleed me, I had been pretty easy ; but for want of that I grew worse again. The malady fell into my eyes, and inflamed them with such severe pain, that I thought I should lose them both.

I HAD those violent pains for three weeks, during which I got very little sleep. I could not shut my eyes, they were so full of the small-pox, nor open them by reason of the pain I endured. There was the greatest probability that I should lose my sight, but I was wholly reconciled to the loss ; my throat, palate, and gums were likewise so filled with the pock, that I could not swallow broth, or take any nourishment, without suffering extremely. My whole body looked like that of a leper. All that saw me said, they had never seen such a shocking spectacle. But as to my soul, it was kept in a contentment not to be expressed. The hopes of its liberty, by the loss of that beauty, which had so frequently brought me under bondage, rendered me so well satisfied, and so united to God, that I would not have changed my condition for that of the most happy Prince in the world,

EVERY one thought I would be inconsolable ; and several expressed their sympathy in my sad condition, as they judged it ; while I lay still, in the secret fruition of a joy unspeakable, in this total deprivation of what had been a snare to my pride, and to the passions of men. I praised
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GOD in profound silence. None ever heard any complaints from me, either of my pains or the loss I sustained. All was well received as from GOD's hand. The only thing that I said was, that I rejoiced at, and was exceeding thankful for the interior liberty I gained thereby ; and they construed this as a great crime. My confessor who had been dissatisfied with me before, came to see me. He asked me if I was not sorry for having the small-pox ; and he now taxed me with pride for my answer.

My youngest little boy took the distemper the same day with myself, and died for want of care. This blow indeed struck me to the heart, but yet, drawing strength from my weakness, I offered him up, and said to GOD as JOB did, " Thou gavest him to me, and thou takest him from me. Blessed be thy holy name." The spirit of sacrifice possessed me so strongly, that, though I loved this child tenderly, I never shed a tear at hearing of his death. The day he was buried, the doctor sent to tell me he had not placed a tombstone upon his grave, because my little girl could not survive him two days. My eldest son was not yet out of danger, so that I saw myself stripped of all my children at once, my husband indisposed, and myself extremely so. GOD did not take my little girl then. He prolonged her life some years, to make the loss more painful to me.

At last my mother-in-law's physician arrived, at a time wherein he could be but of little service to me. When he saw the strange inflammation in my eyes he bled me several times ; but it was too late. And those bleedings which would have
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been so proper, at first, did nothing but weaken me now. They could not even bleed me in the condition I was in, but with the greatest difficulty; for my arms were so swelled, that the surgeon was obliged to push in the lance to a great depth. Moreover the bleeding being out of season had like to have caused my death, this I confess would have been very agreeable to me. I looked upon death as the greatest blessing for me. Yet I saw well I had nothing to hope on that side; and that, instead of meeting with so desirable an event, I must prepare myself to support the trials of life,

AFTER my eldest son was grown better, he got up and came into my chamber. I was surprised at the extraordinary change I saw in him. His face, lately so fair and beautiful, was become like a coarse spot of earth, all full of furrows. That gave me the curiosity to view myself in the looking-glass. I felt myself shock'd, for I saw that GOD had ordered the sacrifice in all its reality.

SOME things now fell out by the contrariety of my Mother-in-law, that caused me severe crosses, and put the finishing stroke to my son's face. However, my heart was firm in my GOD, and strengthened itself by the number and greatness of my sufferings.—I was as a victim incessantly offered upon the altar, to HIM who first had sacrificed himself for love.—*What shall I render to the Lord, for all his benefits towards me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord.* These words, I can truly say, Oh my GOD, have been the delight of my heart, and have had their effect on me, thro' my whole life; for I have been continually heap'd
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with thy blessings, and thy cross. My principal attraction, besides that of suffering for thee, has been to yield myself up without resistance, interiorly and exteriorly, to all thy divine disposals ; and these gifts which I was favoured with from the beginning, have continued and encreased until now,—for thou hast thyself guided my continual crosses, and led me thro' paths impenetrable to all but thee.

THEY sent me pomatums to recover my complexion, and to fill up the hollows of the small-pox. I had seen wonderful effects from it upon others, and therefore at first had a mind to try them : But love, jealous of his work, would not suffer it. There was a voice in my heart which said, “ If I would have had thee fair, I should “ have left thee as thou wert.” I was therefore obliged to lay aside every remedy, and to go into the air, which made the pitting worse, and to expose myself in the streets to the eyes of every one, when the redness of the small-pox was at the worst, in order to make my humiliation triumph, where I had exalted my pride.

My husband kept his bed almost all that time, and made good use of his indisposition. Only as he now lost that, which before had given him so much pleasure in viewing me, he grew much more susceptible of impressions which any gave him against me. In consequence of this, the persons who spoke to him to my disadvantage, finding themselves now better hearkened to, spoke more boldly and more frequently. There was only thou, oh my God, who changed not for me. Thou redoubled thy interior

terior graces, in proportion as thou augmented my exterior crosses.

C H A P. XVI.

MY waiting-maid became every day more haughty: And, as the devil incited her to torment me, seeing that her scoldings and outcries did not now torment me, she thought, if she could hinder me from going to the communion, she should give me the greatest of all vexations. She was not mistaken, oh divine spouse of pure souls, since the only satisfaction of my life was to receive and to honour thee. I procured, as much as was in my power, the churches to be well adorned. I gave every thing, of the finest I had, to furnish them with ornaments, and contributed to the utmost extent of my abilities, to make them have silver plates and chalices. "Oh my Love, I cried, let me be thy victim! Spare nothing to annihilate me." I felt an inexpressible longing to be more reduced, and to become, as it were, a Nothing.

THIS girl then knew my affection for the holy sacrament, where, when I could have liberty for it, I passed several hours on my knees*. She took it in her head to watch me daily. When she discovered my going thither, she ran to tell my mother-in-law and my husband. There needed no more to chagrin them. Their in-

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* The Churches in France are commonly open, and the Communion Table laid out, so that persons have continually an opportunity of resorting there, and performing their devotions as in private.

vectives lasted the whole day. If a word escaped me in my own justification, it was enough to make them say, I was guilty of sacrilege, and to raise an outcry against all devotion. If I made them no answer at all, they still heightened their indignation, and made them say the most grating things they could devise. If I fell sick, which often happened, they took occasion to come to quarrel with me in my bed, saying, my communions and prayers were what made me sick; as if there had been nothing else could make me ill, but my devotions to thee, oh my Love!—

SHE told me one day, in her passion, that she was going to write to him who she thought was my director, to get him to stop me from going to the communion, for that he did not know me. And when I made her no answer, she cried out as loud as she could, “that I treated her ill and “despised her.” When I went out to go to prayers, (though I had taken care before to order every thing about the house) “she ran to tell my husband that I was going abroad, and had left no “thing in order.” When I returned home, rage fell on me in all its violence; they would hear none of my reasons, but said, “they were “all a pack of lies.” My mother-in-law persuaded my husband, “that I let every thing go “to wreck and that, if she did not take care, “he would be ruined.” He believed it, and I bore all with patience, endeavouring, as well as I could, to do my duty. What gave most trouble was the not knowing what course to take; for when I ordered any thing without her, she complained “that I shewed her no respect, that I did “things of my own head, and they were done
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“always the worse for it.” Then she would order them quite contrary: If I consulted her to know what, or how she would have any thing to be done, she said, “she must have the care and “trouble of every thing.”

I HAD scarce any rest but what I found in the love of thy will, oh my God, and submission to thy orders, however rigorous they might be. They incessantly watched my words and actions to find occasion against me. They chid me all the day long, continually repeating, and harping over and over, the same things, and that even before the footmen. How often have I made my meals on my tears, which were interpreted as the most criminal in the world! They said, I would be damn'd; as if the tears would open a hell for me, which surely they were more likely to extinguish. If I recited any thing I had heard, they would render me accountable for the truth of it. If I kept silence, they taxed me with contempt and perverseness; if I knew any thing without telling it, that was a crime; if I told it, then they said, “I had forged it.” Sometimes they tormented me for several days successively, without giving me any relaxation. The girls said, “I ought to feign sickness, to get a little rest.” I made no reply. The love of God so closely possessed me, that it would not allow me to seek relief by a single word, or even by a look. Sometimes I said in myself, “Oh, that I had but any “one who would take notice of me, or to whom “I might unbosom myself, what relief to me “would it be!” But it was not granted me.

YET if I happened to be for some days freed from the exterior cross, it was a most sensible dis-

tress to me, and indeed a punishment more difficult to bear than the severest trials—I then comprehended what St. Theresa says, “let me suffer or die.” For this absence of the cross, was so grievous to me, that I languished with the ardency of desire for its return.—But no sooner was this earnest longing granted, and the blessed cross returned again, than strange as it may seem, it appeared so weighty and burdensome, as to be almost insupportable.

THOUGH I loved my father extremely, and he loved me very tenderly, yet I never spoke to him of my sufferings. One of my relations, who loved me much, perceived the little moderation they used toward me. They spoke very roughly to me before him. He was highly displeased, and told my father of it, adding, that I should pass for a fool. Soon after I went to see my father, who, contrary to his custom, sharply reprimanded me, “for suffering them to treat me in such a manner, without saying any thing in my own defence, adding, every one talk’d of me for it; that it looked as if I had neither sense or spirit to vindicate myself.” I answered, “If they remarked what my husband said to me, that was confusion enough for me without my bringing any more of it on myself by replies; that if they did not remark it, I ought not to cause it to be observed, nor expose my husband’s weakness; that remaining silent stopped all disputes, whereas I might cause them to be continued and increased, by my replies.” My father answered, “I did well, and that I should continue to act as God should inspire me:” And after that, he never spoke to me of it any more.

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THEY were ever talking to me against my father, whom I most tenderly loved and respected, against my relations, and all such as I esteemed most. I felt this more keenly than all they could say against myself. I could not forbear defending them, and therein I did wrong; as whatever I said served only to provoke them. If any complained of my father or relations, they were always in the right. If any, whom they had disliked before, spoke against them, they were presently approved of. If any shewed friendship to me, such were not welcome. A relation whom I greatly loved for her piety, coming to see me, they openly bid her be gone, or treated her in such a manner as obliged her to it, which gave me no small uneasiness. When any considerable person came, they would be speaking against me; even to persons who knew me not, which surprised them: But when they saw me they pitied me.

WHATEVER they said against me, love would not allow me to justify myself. I spoke not to my husband of what either my mother-in-law or the girl did to me, except the first year, when I was not sufficiently touched with the power of God, to suffer such treatment. Nay, I did more than this; for as my mother-in-law and my husband were both passionate, they often quarrelled. Then I was in favour, and to me they made their mutual complaints. I never told the one what the other had said. And though it might have been of service to me, humanly speaking, to take the advantage of such opportunities, I never made use of them to complain of either: Nay, on the contrary, I did not rest till I had reconciled them. I spoke many obliging things
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of the one to the other which always made them friends again : though I knew by frequent experience that I should pay dear for their re-union ! For scarce were they reconciled, but they joined together against me.

I WAS so deeply engaged within, as often to forget things without, yet not any thing which was of consequence. My husband was hasty, and this inattention frequently irritated him. I walked into the garden, without observing any thing there : And when my husband, who could not go thither, asked me about it, I knew not what to say, at which he was angry. I went thither on purpose to remark every thing, in order to tell him about them ; and yet when there, did not think of looking at them. I went ten times one day, to see and bring him an account of them, and yet still forgot it. But when I did remember to look at them, I was much pleased ; yet it generally happened I was then asked nothing about them.

WHEN they were telling any news ; to mortify my curiosity, I used, under some pretext or other, to retire. When my husband afterward would be talking to me about it, I betrayed my ignorance of the matter, and then put him into a fresh fit of rage against me, which I would gladly have avoided being the occasion of ; as I was very desirous of doing my duty, and rendering every thing agreeable to him, so far as was in my power.

ALL my crosses to me would have seemed little, if I might have had liberty to pray, and to be alone, to indulge the interior attention which I felt.—

felt.—But I was obliged still to continue in their presence with such a subjection as is scarcely conceivable. My husband looked on his watch, if at any time I had liberty allowed me for prayer, to see if I stayed above half an hour. If I exceeded it, he grew very uneasy. Sometimes I said to him, “Grant me one hour to divert and employ myself as I have a mind,” And though he would have granted it to me for other diversions, yet for prayer he would not. I confess inexperience caused me much trouble, and I have often thereby given occasion for what they made me suffer: For ought I not to have looked on my captivity as an effect of the will of my God, to content myself therein, and to make it my only desire and prayer? But I often fell back again into the anxiety of wishing to get time for prayer; which was not agreeable to my husband. It is true those faults were more frequent in the beginning. Afterwards I prayed to God in his own retreat, in the temple of my heart, and then I went out no more.

C H A P. XVII.

WE went into the country, where I committed many faults, letting myself go too much after my inward attraction. I thought I might do it then because my husband diverted himself with building. If I stayed from him any time he was dissatisfied, which sometimes happened, as he was continually talking with the workmen. I set myself in a corner, and there had my work with me, but could scarce do any thing by reason of the force of the attraction which made the work fall out of my hands. I passed whole hours this way, without being able either to open my eyes or know what passed in me; but I had nothing to wish for, nor yet to be afraid of. Every where I found my proper centre, because every where I found God.

My heart could then desire nothing but what it had; for this disposition extinguished all its desires; and I sometimes said to myself, "What wantest thou? What fearest thou?" And I was surprized to find upon trial that I had nothing to fear. Every place I was in was my proper place.

As I had generally no time allowed me for prayer but with difficulty, and would not be suffered to rise till seven o'clock, my bed being in my husband's room on account of his illness.—I stole up at four, and kneeling in my bed continued there while he thought me asleep, for I wished not to offend him, and strove to be punctual and assiduous in every thing.—But this soon affected my

my health and injured my eyes, which were still very weak, it being but eight months since I had the small-pox.—This loss of rest brought a heavy trial on me, for as even my sleeping hours were much broken, by the fear of not waking in time—I insensibly dropt asleep at my prayers, even the half hour that I got after dinner, though I felt quite wakeful yet drowsiness overpowered me. I endeavoured to remedy this by the severest bodily inflictions, but in vain.

As we had not yet built the chapel, and were far from any church, I could not go to prayers or Sacrament, without the permission of my husband—and he was very reluctant to suffer me except on Sundays and holydays—I could not go out in the coach, so that I was obliged to make use of some stratagems, and to get service performed very early in the morning, to which feeble as I was I made a shift to creep on foot, although it was a quarter of a league distance. And really GOD wrought wonders for me : For generally, in the mornings when I went to prayers, my husband did not wake till after I was returned : Often, as I was going out, the weather was so cloudy, that the girl I took with me, told me, “ I could not go ; or if I did, I should be soaked with the rain.” I answered her with my usual confidence, “ GOD will assist us.” I generally reached the chapel without being wet : When got thither, the rain fell excessively. When I returned it ceased. When I got home it began again with fresh violence. During several years that I have acted this way, I have never been deceived in my confidence. When I was in town, and could find nobody up, to be seen, I was surprized that there came to me
priests

priests to ask me if I was willing to receive the communion, and that if I was they would give it to me. I had no mind to refuse, oh my Love, the opportunity which thou thyself offeredst me; for I had no doubt of its being thee who inspired them to propose it. Before I had contrived to get divine service at the chapel I have mentioned, I have often suddenly awaked with a strong impulse to go to prayers. My maid would say to me, "But, madam, you are going to tire yourself in vain. There will be no service there." For that chapel was not yet regularly served; However I went full of faith, and at my arrival have found them just ready to begin. If I could particularly enumerate the remarkable providences, which were hereupon given in my favour, there would be enough to fill whole volumes with.

WHEN I wanted to hear from, or write to, Mother GRANGER, I often felt a strong propensity to go to the door. There I found a messenger with a letter from her, which could not have fallen into my hands but for that. But this is only a small instance of these kind of continual providences. She was the only person I could be free to lay open my state to, when I could get to see her, which was with the greatest difficulty; and through providential assistance; having not only been prohibited by my confessor and husband, but all means, that could be devised, were put in practice by my mother-in-law to prevent it. I placed an extreme confidence in Mother GRANGER. I concealed nothing from her, either of my sins or my pains. I would not have done the least thing without telling her. I did
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not now practise any austerities but those she was willing to allow me. There was nothing which I kept from her but my interior dispositions, these I was scarce able to tell, because I knew not how to explain myself thereon, being very ignorant of those matters, having never read or heard of them.

ONE day when they thought I was going to see my father, I ran off to Mother GRANGER. It was discovered, and cost me such crosses as I cannot express; their rage against me, was so excessive that it would be incredible, even my writing to her was extremely difficult. For as I had the utmost abhorrence of a lie, I forbade the footman to tell any. When they were met they were asked whither they were going, and if they had not any letters. My mother-in-law set herself in a little passage, through which those who went out must necessarily pass by her. She asked them whither they were going and what they carried. Sometimes going on foot to the *Benedictines*, I caused shoes to be carried, that they might not perceive by the dirty ones that I had been far. I durst not go alone; and those who attended me had orders to tell every place I went to. If they were discovered to fail in doing it, they were either corrected or turned out of their service.

My husband and mother-in-law were always inveighing against that good woman, though in reality they esteemed her. I sometimes made my own complaint to her; and she replied, "How should you content them, when I have been doing all in my power for these twenty years

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“to satisfy them without success? For as my mother-in-law had two daughters under her care, she was always finding something to say against every thing she did in regard to them.

BUT the most sensible cross to me now was the revolting of my own son against me, whom they inspired with so great a contempt for me, that I could not bear to see him without extreme affliction. When I was in my chamber with some of my friends they sent him to listen to what we said; and as he saw this pleased them he invented a hundred things to tell them. What gave me the severest pang was the loss of my child. If I caught him in a lie, as frequently I did, he would upbraid me, saying, “My grandmother says, you “have been a greater liar than I.” I answered him, “Therefore I know the deformity of that “vice, and how hard a thing it is to get the better “of it: And for this reason, I would not have you “suffer the like.” He spoke to me things very offensive; and because he remarked the awe I stood in of his grandmother and his father, if in their absence I found fault with him for any thing, he insultingly upbraided me, and said, “That now I wanted to set up for his mistress, “because they were not there.” All this they approved of, in so much as to strengthen him in his most perverse inclinations. One day he went to see my father, and rashly began talking against me to him, as he was used to do to his grandmother. But there it did not meet with the same recompence. It affected my father to tears: he came to our house to desire he might be corrected for it. They promised it should be done, and yet they never did it. I was grievously afraid of
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the consequences of so bad an education. I told Mother GRANGER of it, who consoled me, and said, "That since I could not remedy it, I must "suffer and leave every thing to God; and that "this child would be my cross."

ANOTHER great cross was the difficulty I had in attending my husband. I knew he was displeased when I was not with him; and yet when I was with him, he never expressed any pleasure in it, nor at any thing I did. On the contrary, he only rejected with scorn whatever office I performed. He was so very uneasy with me about every thing, that I sometimes trembled when I approached him. I could do nothing to his liking; and when I did not attend him, he was angry. He had taken such a dislike to soups, that he could not bear the sight of them; and those that offered them had so rough a reception, that neither his mother nor any of the domestics would carry them to him. There was none but I who did not refuse that office. I brought them to him, and let his anger pass; then tried in some agreeable manner to prevail on him to take them. And when his passion increased, I waited with patience, after which I said to him, "I had rather be reprimanded several times a day, than let you suffer "by not bringing you what is proper." Sometimes he took them; at other times pushed them back. But as he saw my perseverance, he would at length submit to take them.

WHEN he was in good humour, and I was carrying something agreeable to him, then my mother-in-law would snatch it out of my hands, and carry it herself. And as he thought I was not so careful and studious to please him, he would

would fly in a rage against me, and express great thankfulness to his mother. I silently suffered it all: I used all my skill and endeavours to gain my mother-in-law's favour by my assiduities, my presents, my services; but was not lucky enough to succeed. How bitter and grievous, oh my God, would such a life be were it not for thee? But thou hast sweetened and reconciled it to me. I had a few very short intervals from this severe and mortifying life; but these served only to make the reverses more keen and bitter.

C H A P. XVIII.

ABOUT eight or nine months after my recovery from the small-pox, Father LA COMBE, passing by our house, brought me a letter from Father de la MORTE,* recommending him to my esteem, and expressing the highest friendship for him. I hesitated much, for I was very loth to make new acquaintances, but the fear of offending my brother prevailed. After a short conversation we both desired a farther opportunity. I thought that he either loved God, or was disposed to love him, and I wished every body to love him. God had already made use of me for the conversion of three of his order. The strong desire he had of seeing me again induced him to come to our country-house, which was about half a league from the town. A little accident which happened opened a way for me to speak

* He was a Bernabite, half brother of Lady Guion, by the father, a malevolent, selfish ecclesiastic, as we shall see in the second and third parts.

speak to him. As he was in discourse with my husband, who relished his company, he was taken ill, and retired into the garden. My husband soon bade me go and see what was the matter with him. I went : He told me he had remarked in my countenance, a deep inwardness and presence of God, which had given him a strong desire of seeing me again : And God then assisted me to open to him the interior path of the soul, and conveyed so much grace to him through this poor channel, that he has owed to me since, that he went away, changed into quite another man. I preserved an esteem for him ; for it appeared to me that he would be devoted to God ; but little did I then foresee, that I should ever be led to the place where he was to reside.

My disposition at this time, as I have said, was a continual prayer, without knowing it to be such ; for the presence of God was so plentifully given, that it seemed to be more in me than my very self. The sensibility thereof was so powerful, so penetrating, it seemed to me irresistible ; and love took from me all liberty of my own. At other times I was so dry, I felt nothing but the pain of absence, which was the keener to me, as the divine Presence had before been so sensible. In these alternatives, when love was present, I forgot in such a manner all my troubles and pains, that it appeared to me as if I never had experienced any : And, in its absence, it seemed as if it never would return again. I still thought it was through some fault of mine it was withdrawn, and that rendered me inconsolable. Had I known it had been a state through which it was necessary to pass, I should not have been troubled ; for my strong
love

was to the will of God, would have rendered every thing easy to me; the property of this prayer being to give a great love to the order of God, with an absolute and perfect reliance on him, as to fear nothing, whether dangers, thunder, storms, or death. It gives a great abstraction from one's self, their own interests and reputation, with an utter disregard to every thing of the kind; all being swallowed up in the esteem of the will of God.

At home, I was accused of every thing that was ill done, spoiled or broken. At first I told the truth, and said it was not I; they persisted, and accused me of lying. I then made no reply. Besides, they told all their tales to such as came to the house. But when I was afterwards alone with the same persons, I never undeceived them. I often heard such things said of me, before my friends, as were enough to make them entertain a bad opinion of me. My mind kept a fluctuation in the tacit consciousness of my own innocence, not concerning myself whether they thought well or ill of me; excluding all the world, all opinions or censures, out of my view, and minding nothing else but the friendship of God only.

As I thought myself I happened at any time to annoy myself, I always cried, and drew upon myself many crosses, both within and without: but now, in doing all this, I was so encouraged with the love of my great cross, or it would have been to be without one. When the cross was laid upon me, in my short space, it seemed to expand; I was vexed to see how I made such a use of it, and my uncharitableness reproved me.

of so great an advantage; for I never knew its value better than in its loss. Oh, dear cross, my faithful companion! As my Saviour became incarnate, only to die in thy arms, should not I be conformable to him in that: And wilt not thou be the means of uniting me to him for ever? O my Love, I cried, punish me any way, but take not the cross from me. This amiable cross returned to me with so much the more weight, as my desire was more vehement. I could not reconcile two things, they appeared to me so very opposite: *viz.* To desire the cross with so much ardour, and to support it with so much difficulty and pain.

GOD knows well, in the admirable œconomy he observes, how to render the crosses more weighty, conformable to the ability of the creature to bear them; giving them always something new and unexpected. Hereby my soul began to be more resigned, and to comprehend that the state of absence, and of wanting what I longed for, was in its turn, more profitable than that of always abounding: because this latter nourished *self-love*. If GOD did not act thus, the soul would never die to itself. That principle of *self-love* is so crafty and dangerous, that it cleaves to every thing.

WHAT gave me most uneasiness, in this time of darkness and crucifixion, both within and without, was an inconceivable readiness to be quick and hasty. When any answer a little too lively escaped me, (which served not a little to humble me,) they said, "I was fallen into a mortal sin." A conduct no less rigorous than this was quite necessary for me; for I was so proud, passionate, and
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of a humour naturally thwarting, wanting always to carry matters my own way, and thinking my own reasons better than those of others ; that, hadst thou, oh my GOD ! spared the strokes of thy hammer, I should never have been formed to thy will, to be an instrument for thy use ; for I was ridiculously vain. Applause rendered me intolerable. I praised my friends to excess, and blamed others without reason : But, the more criminal I have been, the more I am indebted to thee, and the less of any good can I attribute to myself. Oh, how blind are men who attribute to others the holiness that GOD gives them ! I believe, my GOD, that thou hast had children, who under thy grace, owed much to their own fidelity ; but as for me, I owe all to thee ; I glory to confess it ; I cannot acknowledge it to much.

IN acts of charity I was very assiduous. So great was my tenderness for the poor, that I wished to have supplied all their wants ; I could not see their necessity, without reproaching myself for the plenty I enjoyed. I deprived myself of all I could to help them. The very best at my table was distributed among them. There were few of the poor where I lived, who did not partake of my liberality. It seemed as if thou hadst made me thy only Almoner there, for being refused by others, they came all to me. “ Oh my divine Love ! I cried, it is thy substance ; I am only the steward of it. I ought to distribute it according to thy will.” I found means to relieve them without letting myself be known, because I had one who dispensed my alms privately. When there were families who were ashamed to take in this way, I sent

sent it to them as if I owed them a debt. I clothed such as were naked, and caused young girls to be taught how to earn their livelihood, especially such as were handsome, to the end that being employed, and having whereon to live, they might not be under a temptation to throw themselves away. God made use of me to reclaim several from their disorderly lives; and there was one of beauty and distinction, who has since made a happy end. I went to visit the sick, to comfort them, to make their beds. I made ointments, dressed their wounds, buried their dead. I privately furnished tradesmen and mechanics wherewith to keep up their shops. My heart was much opened toward my fellow-creatures in distress: And few indeed could carry charity much farther than our Lord enabled me to do, according to my state, both while married and since.

To purify me the more from the mixture I might make of his gifts with my own *self-love*, he gave me interior probations, which were very heavy. I began to experience an insupportable weight, in that very piety which had formerly been so easy and delightful to me; not that I did not love it extremely, but I found myself defective in that noble practice of it, to which I aspired. The more I loved it, the more I laboured to acquire what I saw I failed in. But alas! I seemed continually to be overcome by that which was contrary to it. My heart, indeed, was detached from all sensual pleasures. For these several years past, it has seemed to me that my mind is so detached and absent from the body, that I do things as if I did them not. If I eat or refreshed

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myself, it is done with such an absence, or separation, as I wonder at, and with an entire mortification of the keenness of sensation in all the natural functions.

C H A P. XIX.

TO resume the thread of my history, the small-pox had so much hurt one of my eyes, that it was feared I should lose it. The gland at the corner of my eye was much injured. An imposthume arose from time to time between the nose and the eye, which gave me exquisite pain till it was lanced. It swelled all my head to that degree, that I could not bear even a pillow. The least noise was an agony to me, though sometimes they made a great one in my chamber; and yet this was a precious time to me, for two reasons; the first, because I was left in bed alone, where I had a sweet retreat without interruption; the other, because it answered the desire which I had after suffering, which desire was so great, that all the austerities of the body would have been but as a drop of water to quench so great a fire; and indeed the severities and rigours which I then exercised were extreme—but they appeased not at all this appetite for the cross.—For 'tis thou alone, Oh Crucified SAVIOUR, who canst frame the Cross, truly effectual for the death of SELF. Let others bless themselves in their ease or gaiety, grandeur or pleasures, poor temporary heavens: As for me, my desires were all turned another way, even to the silent path of suffering for CHRIST, and to be united to him, through the mortification of all that was of nature

ture in me, that my senses, appetites and will, being dead to these, might wholly live in him.

I obtained leave to go to *Paris* for the cure of my eye; and yet it was much more thro' the desire I had to see Monsieur BERTOT, a man of profound experience, whom Mother GRANGER had lately assigned to me for my director. I went to take my leave of my father, who embraced me with peculiar tenderness, little thinking then that it would be our last adieu.

PARIS was a place now no longer to be dreaded as in times past. The throngs only served to draw me into a deep recollection, and the noise of the streets but augmented my inward prayer. I saw Monsieur BERTOT, who did not prove of that service to me, which he would have done if I had then had the power to explain myself: but though I wished earnestly to hide nothing from him, yet God held me so close to himself, that I could tell him scarce any thing at all. As soon as I spoke to him every thing was vanished from my mind, so that I could remember nothing but some few faults which I told him. As I saw him very seldom, and nothing stayed in my recollection, and as I read of nothing any way resembling my case, I knew not how to open myself upon it. Beside I desired to make nothing known, but the evil which was in me. Therefore Monsieur BERTOT knew me not till after his death. This was of great utility to me, for taking away every support, and making me truly die to myself.

I WENT to pass the ten days, from the Ascension to Whitsuntide, at an abbey four leagues from

from *Paris*, the Abbess of which had a particular friendship for me. Here my union with **God** seemed to be deeper and more continual, becoming always simple, but at the same time more close and intimate.

ONE day I awaked suddenly at four o'clock in the morning, with a strong impression on my mind, that my father was dead; and though at the same time my soul was in a very great contentment, yet my love for him affected it with sorrow, and my body with weakness. Under the strokes and daily troubles which befel me, my will was so subservient to thine, oh my **God**, that it appeared absolutely united to it. There seemed indeed to be no will left in me but thine only. My own disappeared, and no desires, tendencies or inclinations were left, but to the one sole object of whatever was most pleasing to thee, be it what it would. If I had a will, it was in union with thine, as two well tuned lutes in concert: That which is not touched renders the same sound as that which is touched: It is but one and the same sound, one pure harmony. It is this union of the will which establishes in perfect peace. Yet though my own will was lost, as to its operations, I have found since, in the strange states I have been obliged to pass through, how much it had yet to cost me to have it totally lost, as to all its properties in all the circumstances, and whole extent thereof, in order that the soul should retain no more any interest or desire of its own, of either time or eternity, but only the interest of **God** alone, in the manner that is known to himself, and not in our way of conceiving. How many souls are there
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which think their own wills quite lost, while they are yet very far from it! They would find they still subsist, if they met with hard probations. Who is there who does not wish something for himself, either of interest, wealth, honour, pleasure, conveniency, liberty, &c.? And he who thinks his mind loose from all these objects, because he possesses them, would soon perceive his attachment to them, were he stripped of those he is possessed of. If there are found in a whole age three persons so dead to every thing, as to be utterly resigned to providence without any exception, they may well pass for prodigies of grace.—As I am not mistress of what I write, I follow not any order :—But it makes little matter.

IN the afternoon as I was with the Abbess, I told her I had strong presentiments of my father's death. Indeed I could hardly speak, I was so affected within, and enfeebled without. Presently came one to tell her that she was wanted in the parlour. It was a man that had rid post, and was come express, with an account from my husband that my father was ill. And as I afterwards found it held him only twelve hours, he therefore was by this time dead. The Abbess returning says, "Here is a letter from your husband who writes that your father is taken violently ill." I said to her, "he is dead, I cannot have a doubt about it." I sent away to *Paris* immediately, to hire a coach, to go the sooner. Mine waited for me at the Midway. I went off at nine o'clock at night. They said, "I was going to destroy myself," for I had no acquaintance with me; as I had sent away my maid to *Paris*, to put every thing in order there; and being in a religious house, I had no mind to keep

keep any footman with me there. The Abbess told me, "that since I thought my father was dead, it would be rashness in me to expose myself, and run the risque of my life in that manner; that coaches could hardly pass the way I was going, it being no beaten road." I answered, "That it was my indispensable duty to go to assist my father, and that I ought not, on a bare apprehension, to exempt myself from it." I went then alone, abandoned to Providence, with people unknown. My weakness was so great, that I could hardly keep my seat in the coach, and yet I was often forced to alight, on account of dangerous spots in the road.

IN this way I was obliged, about midnight, to cross a forest, notorious for murders and robberies. The most intrepid dreaded it; but my resignation left me scarce any room to think at all about it.—Oh what fears and uneasiness does a resigned soul spare itself!—Thus all alone I arrived within five leagues of my own habitation, where, I found my confessor who had opposed me, with one of my relations waiting for me. The sweet consolation I had enjoyed, when alone, was now interrupted. My confessor, ignorant of my state, restrained me intirely. My grief was of such a nature that I could not shed a tear. And I was ashamed to hear a thing which I knew but too well, without giving any exterior mark of grief. The inward and profound peace I enjoyed dawned on my countenance, and the state I was in did not permit me to speak, or to do such things as are usually expected from persons of piety. I could do nothing but love and be silent.

I FOUND

I FOUND on my arrival at home, that my father was already buried, on account of the excessive heat. It was ten o'clock at night. All wore the habit of mourning.—I had travelled thirty leagues in a day and a night. As I was very weak, not having taken any nourishment, I was instantly put to bed.

ABOUT two o'clock in the morning my husband got up, and having gone out of my chamber, he returned presently, crying out with all his might, "My daughter is dead."—She was my only daughter, as dearly beloved as truly lovely. She had so many graces both of body and mind conferred on her, that one must have been insensible not to have loved her. She had an extraordinary share of love to GOD. Often was she found in corners at prayer. As soon as she perceived me at prayer, she came and joined me, and if she discovered that I had been at it without her, she would weep bitterly and cry, "Ah mama you pray but I dont."—When we were alone and she saw my eyes closed—she'd whisper, "are you asleep," and then cry out, Ah no, you are praying to our dear JESUS, and dropping on her knees before me she would begin to pray too. She was several times whipt by her grandmother, because she said, "She "would never have any other husband but our "LORD," yet could she never make her say otherwise. She was innocent and modest as a little angel; very dutiful and endearing, and withal very beautiful. Her father doated on her, and to me she was very dear, much more for the qualities of her mind than those of her beautiful person. I looked upon her as my only consolation on earth: For she had as much affection
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for me, as her brother had aversion and contempt. She died of an unseasonable bleeding : But what shall I say ? she died by the hands of him who was pleased, for wise reasons of his own, to strip me of all.

THERE now remained to me only the son of my sorrow. He fell ill to the point of death, but was restored at the prayer of Mother GRANGER, now my only consolation after GOD. I no more wept for my child than for my father. I could only say, "Thou, oh LORD, gave her to me ; it pleases thee to take her back again, for she was thine." As for my father, his virtue was so generally known, that I must rather be silent, than enter upon the subject. His reliance on GOD, his faith and patience were wonderful. Both died in July 1672. From henceforth crosses were not spared me : And tho' I have had abundance of them hitherto, yet they were only the shadows of those which I have been since obliged to pass through, pursuant to a marriage contract, which I had newly entered into with our LORD JESUS CHRIST. In this spiritual marriage I claimed for my dowry only crosses, scourges, persecutions, ignominies, lowliness, and nothingness of self, which in his great goodness, and for wise ends, as I have seen, he has been pleased to grant and confer upon me.

ONE day being in great distress, on account of the redoubling of outward and inward crosses, I went into my closet to give vent to my grief. M. BERTOT, was brought into my mind, with this wish, *Oh that he was sensible of what I suffer !* Tho' he wrote but very seldom, and with great difficulty, yet he wrote me a letter dated

dated the same day about the cross, the finest and most consolatory he ever wrote me on that subject. Sometimes my spirit was so oppressed with continual crosses, which scarce gave me any relaxation, that when alone my eyes turned every way, to see if they could find any thing to give some relief. A word, a sigh, a trifle, or to know that any one took part in my grief, would have been some comfort; but that was not granted me, not even to look toward heaven, or make any complaint. Love held me then so close, that it would have this miserable nature to perish, without giving it any support or nourishment.

OH my dearest LORD! thou yet gave my soul a victorious support, which made it triumph over all the weaknesses of *nature*, and seized thy knife to sacrifice *it* without sparing. And yet this nature so perverse, and full of artifices to save its life, at last took the course of nourishing itself with its own despair, and with its fidelity under such heavy and continual oppression, and withal sought to conceal the value it attributed thereto: But thy eyes, oh my divine Love, were too penetrating not to detect the subtilty. Wherefore, thou, oh my Shepherd, changed thy conduct toward it. Thou sometimes comforted it with *thy crook and thy staff*; that is to say, by thy conduct as loving as crucifying, but it was only to reduce it to the last extremity, as I shall shew hereafter.

CHAP. XX.

A LADY of rank, whom I sometimes visited, took a particular liking to me, because, (as she was pleased to say) my person and manners were agreeable to her. She said that she observed in me something extraordinary and uncommon. I believe it was the inward attraction of my soul that appeared on my very countenance: For one day a gentleman of fashion said to my husband's aunt, "I saw the Lady your niece; and it is very visible that she lives in the presence of God." I was surprized at hearing this as I little thought that such an one as he could know what it was to have God thus present. This lady, I say, began to be touched with the sense of God: For, wanting once to take me to the play, I refused to go; (as I never went to plays,) making use of the pretext of my husband's continual indispositions. She pressed me exceedingly, and said, "I should not be prevented by his sickness from taking some amusement; and that I was not of an age to be confined with the sick like a nurse." I told her my reasons for acting so by my husband. She then perceived that it was more from a principle of piety, than the indispositions of my husband, that I did not go. Insisting to know my sentiment of plays, I told her, "I entirely disapproved of them, and especially for a christian woman:" And as she was far more advanced in years than I was, what I then said made such an impression on her mind, that she never after went to them.

BEING

BEING once with her and another lady, who was fond of talking and had read the fathers, they spoke much of GOD. This lady spoke learnedly of him. I said scarce any thing, being inwardly drawn to silence, and troubled at such kind of conversation about GOD. My acquaintance, came next day to see me, "The LORD" had so touched her heart, that she could stand "out no longer." I attributed this touch to something the other lady had spoken: But she said to me, "Your silence had something in it which penetrated to the bottom of my soul: And I could not relish what the other said." Then we spoke to one another with open hearts.

It was then that God left indelible impressions of his grace on her soul, and she continued so athirst for him, that she could scarcely endure to converse on any other subject. That she might become wholly his, he deprived her of a most affectionate husband, and visited her by such severe crosses, and at the same time poured his grace so abundantly into her heart, that he soon became the sole master thereof. After the death of her husband, and the loss of most of her fortune, she went to reside four leagues from our house, on a small estate, which she yet had left. She obtained my husband's consent to my going to pass a week with her, to console her under her losses. God gave her by my means all she wanted. She had a great share of understanding, but was surprized at my expressing things to her so far above my natural capacity. I should have been surprized at it myself, had I reflected on it: But it was God who gave me the gift for her sake, diffusing a flood of grace into her soul, without regarding the unworthiness of the channel he was pleased to make use of. Since that time

time her soul has been the temple of the Holy Ghost, and our hearts have been indissolubly united.

My husband and I took a little journey together ; in which both my resignation and humility were exercised, yet without difficulty or constraint, so powerful was the influence of divine grace. We had all like to have perished in a river: The rest of the company in a desperate fright threw themselves out of the coach, which sunk in the moving sand. I continued so much inwardly occupied, that I did not once think of the danger. GOD delivered me from it without my thought of avoiding it. I was quite content to be drowned, had he permitted it. It may be said, "I was rash;" I believe I was so: Yet I rather chose to perish, trusting in GOD, than make my escape in a dependance on myself. But what say I? We do not perish, but for want of trusting in him. My pleasure is to be indebted to him for every thing. This renders me content in my miseries, which I would rather endure all my life long, in a state of resignation to him, than put an end to them, in a dependance on myself. However I would not advise others to act thus, unless they were in the same disposition which I was in at that time.

As my husband's maladies daily increased ; he resolved to go to St. REINE, he appeared very desirous of having none but me with him, and told me one day, "If they never spoke to me against you, I should be more easy; and you more happy." In this journey I committed many faults of *self-love* and *self-seeking*; and being in a deep interior resignation, experienced
thereby

thereby what I should be without thy fatherly care, oh God. For some time past, thou hadst withdrawn from me that sweet interior correspondence which before I had only to follow. I was become like a poor traveller that had lost his way in the night, and could find no way, path, or track : But as I reserve for another place the description of the terrible darkness through which I passed, I shall here continue the thread of my history. My husband in his return from St. REINE, passed by St. EDM. Having now no children but my first-born son, who was often at the gates of death, he wished exceedingly for heirs, and prayed for them earnestly. God granted his desire, and gave me a second son. The approach of my lying-in was a season of great consolation to me. And though in my delivery I had a severe time, the love I had for the cross made me look on it all with pleasure. I rejoiced because nature had so much to suffer. Beside, as I was several weeks, after my delivery, without any one daring to speak to me, on account of my great weakness, it was a time of retreat and of silence, wherein I tried to indemnify myself for the loss of time I had sustained in the others, to pray to thee, my God, and to continue alone with thee. I may say that during the nine months of my pregnancy, God took a new possession of me, and left me not. It was a time of continual joy without interruption. As I had experienced many inward difficulties, weaknesses and withdrawals of my Love, it was a new life. It seemed as if I was already in the fruition of beatitude. But how dear did this happy time cost me, since it was only a preparative to a total privation of comfort for several years, without any support, or hope of return ! It began

gan with the death of Mrs. GRANGER, who had been my only consolation under GOD. Before my return from St. REINE I heard she was dead.

WHEN I received this news, I confess it was the most afflicting stroke I had ever felt. I thought, had I been with her at her death, I might have spoke to her, and received her last instructions: But GOD has so ordered it that I was deprived of her assistance in almost all my losses, in order to render the strokes more painful. Some months indeed before her death, it was shewn to me, that though I could not see her but with extreme difficulty, and suffering for it, yet she was still some support to me: And the LORD let me know that it would be profitable for me to be deprived of her: But at the time she died I did not think so. It was in that trying season when my paths were all blocked up, she was taken from me, she who might have guided me in my lonesome and difficult road; bounded as it were with precipices, and entangled with briars and thorns.

OH adorable conduct of my GOD! There must be no guide for the person whom thou art leading into the regions of darkness and death; no conductor for the man whom thou art determined to destroy, (*i. e.* to cause to die totally to himself.) After having saved me with so much mercy, O my Love; after having led me by the hand in rugged paths, it seems thou wast bent on my destruction. May it not be said that thou dost not save but to destroy, nor go to seek the lost sheep, but to cause it to be yet more lost; that thou art pleased in building
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what is demolished, and in demolishing what is built. Thus thou wouldst overturn the temple built by human endeavours, with so much care and industry—in order as it were miraculously to erect a divine structure—a house not built with hands, eternal in the heavens.—Oh secrets of the incomprehensible wisdom' of God, unknown to any besides himself!—Yet man, sprung up only of a few days, wants to penetrate, and to set bounds to it. Who is it that hath known the mind of the LORD, or who hath been his counsellor? It is a wisdom only to be known through death to every thing, and through the entire loss of all self.

My brother now openly shewed his hatred for me. He married at *Orleans*, and my husband had the complaisance to go to his marriage, tho' he was in a poor state of health, the roads bad, and so covered with snow, that we had like to have been overset more than fifteen times: And yet, far from appearing obliged by his politeness, my brother quarrelled with him more than ever, and without any reason too; and I was the butt of both their resentments. While I was at *Orleans*, meeting with one whom at that time I thought highly of, I was too forward and free in speaking to him of spiritual things, thinking I was doing well, but had a remorse for it afterwards; which I so remembered, that I no more fell into the like fault again. How often does one mistake nature for grace! One must be dead to one's self, when such forwardness comes from God only.

ON my return, my brother treated me with the utmost contempt: Yet, my mind was so
much

much drawn inward, that though we had much more danger on the road than in going, I had no thought about myself, but only about my husband; so that seeing the coach overturning, I said, "Fear not, it is on my side that it falls; it will not hurt you." I believe, had all perished, I should not have been moved, my peace was so profound that nothing could shake it. If these times continued, we should be too strong. But they now began to come but seldom, and were followed with long and wearisome privations. Though since that time my brother is changed for the better, and has turned on the side of GOD, yet he has never turned to me. It has been by particular permission of GOD, and the conduct of his Providence over my soul, that has caused him and other religious persons, who have persecuted me, to think they were rendering glory to GOD, and doing actions of justice therein. And indeed what greater justice than that all creatures should be treacherous to me, and declare against me, who have too many times been treacherous to GOD, and sided with the contrary party!

AFTER this there fell out a very perplexing affair. To me it caused great crosses, and seemed designed for nothing else. A certain person conceived so much malice against my husband, that he was determined to ruin him if possible. He found no other way to attempt it, but by entering into a private engagement with my brother; by which he obtained a power to demand, in the name of MONSIEUR, the king's brother, two hundred thousand livres, which he pretended to make appear that my brother and I owed him. My brother signed the processes, upon an assurance

ance given him, that he should not pay any thing. I think his youth engaged him in what he did not understand. This affair so chagrined my husband, that I have room to believe it shortened his days. He was so angry with me, though I was innocent, that he could not speak to me but in a fury. He would give me no light into the affair, and I did not know in what it consisted. In the height of his rage, he said he would not meddle in it, but give me up my portion, and let me live as I could; with many other things still more grating. On the other side my brother would not stir in it, nor suffer it to be done. The day when the trial was to come on, after prayers, I felt myself strongly pressed to go to the judges. I was wonderfully assisted herein, even so as to discover and unravel all the turns and artifices of this affair, without knowing how I could have been able to do it. The first judge was so surprized to see the affair so very different from what he had thought it before, that he himself exhorted me to go to the other judges, and especially to the intendant, who was just then going to court, and was quite misinformed about the matter. God enabled me to manifest the truth in so clear a light, and gave such power to my words, that the intendant thanked me for having so seasonably come to undeceive, and set him to rights in the affair. Had I not done this, he assured me the cause had been lost. And as they saw the falschood of every article, they would have condemned the plaintiff to the costs, if it had not been so great a prince, who lent his name to the officers that deceived him. But to save the honour of the prince, they ordered us to pay him fifty crowns. Hereby the two

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hundred

hundred thousand livres were reduced to only one hundred and fifty. My husband was exceedingly pleased at what I had done : But my brother appeared as outrageous against me, as if I had caused him some very great loss. Thus moderately and at once ended an affair, which had at first appeared so very weighty and alarming.

C H A P. XXI.

ABOUT this time I fell into a state of total privation which continued near seven years. I seemed to myself cast down, as it were, from a throne of enjoyment, like NEBUCHADNEZZAR, to live among beasts ; a deplorable state, yet of the greatest advantage to me, by the use which divine wisdom made of it. This state of emptiness, darkness, and impotency, went far beyond any trials I had ever yet met with. I have experienced since that, the prayer of the heart when it appears most dry and barren, nevertheless is not ineffectual nor offered in vain. For GOD gives what is best for us, though not what we most relish or wish for. Oh, were people but convinced of this truth ; far from complaining all their life long, they would employ it only in making use, by a crucified faithfulness, and death of the situation GOD brings them into. Hence, by causing us death they would procure us life ; for it is a wonderful thing, as all our happiness, spiritual, temporal and eternal, consists in resigning ourselves to GOD, leaving it to him to do in us and with us as he pleases, and with so much the more submission, as things please us less ; how, by this pure dependence
on

on his Spirit, every thing is given us admirably : Our very weaknesses, in his hand, prove a source of humiliation. If the soul were faithful to leave itself in the hand of God, sustaining all his operations, whether gratifying or mortifying, suffering itself to be conducted, from moment to moment, by his hand, and annihilated by the strokes of his Providence, without complaining, or desiring any thing besides what it has ; it would soon arrive at the experience of the eternal truth, though it might not know till late the ways and methods by which God conducted it thereto.

BUT the misfortune is, that people want to direct God, instead of resigning themselves to be directed by him. They want to shew him a way, instead of passively following that wherein he leads them. And from hence many souls, called to enjoy God himself, and not barely his gifts, spend all their lives in running after little consolations, and feeding on them ; resting there only, and making all their happiness to consist therein.

FOR you, my dear children, if my chains and my imprisonment any way afflict you, I pray that they may serve to engage you to seek nothing but God for himself alone, and never to desire to possess him but by the death of your whole selves, never to seek to be something in the ways of the Spirit, but choose ye to enter into the most profound nothingness.

I HAD an internal strife, which continually racked me;—two powers which appeared equally strong, seemed equally to struggle for the mastery within me.—On the one hand, a desire of pleasing

pleasing thee, oh my God, a fear of offending, and a continual tendency of all my powers to thee;—and on the other side, the view of all my inward corruptions, the depravity of my heart, and the continual stirring and rising of self; promptitude of spirit, and a dragging outward towards the creatures.—Oh what torrents of tears, what desolations have these cost me?—Is it possible, I cried, that I have received so many graces and favours from God—only to lose them;—that I have loved him with so much ardour, but to be eternally deprived of Him.—That his benefits have only produced my ingratitude,—his fidelity been paid by my infidelity; that my heart has been emptied of all creatures, and created objects, and filled with his presence and love,—in order now to be wholly void of divine power, and only filled with wanderings and created objects.

I COULD now no longer pray as formerly. Heaven seemed shut to me, and I thought justly too. I could get no consolation, nor make any complaint thereupon; nor had I any creature on earth to apply to, or to whom I might impart my condition. I found myself banished from all beings, without finding a support or refuge in any thing. I could no more practise any virtue with facility; such as had formerly been familiar to me seemed now to have left me. “Alas! said I, is it possible that this heart, formerly all on fire, should now become like ice?”—I often thought all creatures combined against me. Loaden with a weight of past sins, and a multitude of new ones, I could not think God would ever pardon me, but looked on myself as a victim designed for hell. I would have
been

been glad to do penances, to make use of prayers, pilgrimages, and vows. But still whatever I tried for a remedy, seemed only to increase the malady. I may say that tears were my drink, and sorrow my food. I felt in myself such a pain as I never could bring any to comprehend, but such as have experienced it. I had within myself an executioner who tortured me without respite. Even when I went to church, I was not easy there. To sermons I could give no attention; they were now of no service or refreshment to me. I scarce conceived or understood any thing at them, or about them. Heretofore, I had endured pain with pleasure, and rejoiced at the sight of danger; but now a little of the former put me in a fret, and the shadow of the latter threw me into a fright.

C H A P. XXII.

AS my husband drew near his end, his distempers had no intermission. No sooner was he in appearance recovered from one but he fell into another. The gout, fever, gravel succeeded one another. He bore great pains with much patience, offering them to GOD, and making a good use of them : Yet his anger toward me increased, because reports and stories of me were multiplied to him, and those about him did nothing but vex him. He was the more susceptible of such impressions, as his pains gave him a stronger bent to vexation. At this time, the maid, who had used to torment me, sometimes took pity on me. She came to me as soon as I was gone into my closet, and said, " Come to my master, that your mother-in-law may not speak to him any more against you." I pretended to be ignorant of it all ; but he could not conceal his displeasure, nor even suffer me near him. My mother-in-law at the same time kept no bounds. All that came to the house were witnesses of the continual scoldings, which I was forced to bear, and which I bore with much patience, notwithstanding my being in the condition I have mentioned.

My husband having, some time before his death, finished the building of the chapel in the country, where we spent a part of the summer, I had the conveniency of hearing prayers every day, and of the communion ; but not daring to do it openly every day, the priest privately admitted.

mitted me to the communion. They solemnized the dedication of this little chapel, and though I had already begun to enter into the condition I have described, yet when they began to bless it, I felt myself all on a sudden inwardly seized, which continued more than five hours, all the time of the ceremony, when our LORD made a new consecration of me to himself. I then seemed to myself a temple consecrated to him, both for time and for eternity; and said within myself, (speaking both of the one and the other) "May this temple never be profaned: May the praises of my GOD be sung therein for ever!" It seemed to me at that time as if my prayer was granted. But soon all this was taken from me, and not so much as any remembrance thereof left to console me.

WHEN I was at this country house, which was only a little place of retreat before the chapel was built, I retired for prayer to woods and caverns. How many times, here, has GOD preserved me from dangerous and venomous beasts! Sometimes, at unawares, I kneeled upon serpents, which were there in great plenty; and they fled away without doing me any harm. Once I happened to be alone in a little wood wherein was a mad bull. I had an antipathy for these animals, and they for me, to such a degree as to single me out among several persons, and run after me. Every one cried out for fear; but, without offering me the least hurt, he betook himself to flight. If I could recount all the providences of GOD in my favour, it would appear wonderful: They were indeed so frequent and so continual, that
I could

I could not but be astonished at them. God everlastingly gives to such as have nothing wherewith to repay him. If there appears in the creature any fidelity or patience, it is he alone who gives it: If he ceases, for an instant to support; if he seem to leave me to myself, I cease to be strong, and find myself weaker than any other creature. If my miseries shew what I am, his favours shew what he is, and the extreme necessity I am under of ever depending on him.—But in writing I am frequently apt to wander.

As I grew big with my daughter, and was like to die, they spared me for some time; for I was so extremely ill that the doctors gave me over. At last, after having passed twelve years and four months in the crosses of marriage, as great as possible, except poverty which I never knew, though I had much desired it, God drew me out of that state (after the manner I am going to relate) to give me still stronger crosses to bear, and of such a nature as I had never met with before: For if you give attention, sir, to the life which you have ordered me to write, you will remark that my crosses have been increasing till the present time, one being removed to give place to another to succeed it, still heavier than the former. Amidst the great troubles imposed upon me, when they said, “I was in a mortal sin,” I had nobody in the world to speak to. I could have wished to have had somebody for a witness of my conduct; but I had not any. I had no support, no confessor, no director, no friend, no counsellor. I had lost all: And after God had taken from me one after another, he withdrew

drew also himself. I remained without any creature ; and to complete my distress, I seemed to be left without God himself, who alone could support me in such a deeply distressing state.

As to my husband, his illness grew every day more obstinate. He apprehended the approach of death, and even wished for it, so oppressive was the languishing life he dragged on. To his other ills was added, so great a dislike to every sort of nourishment, that he did not take any thing necessary to sustain life. There was none but I that had the courage to get him to take what little he did. The doctor advised him to go into the country. There for a few days at first he seemed to be better, when he was suddenly taken with the cholic, a retention of his urine, a violent fever, and an imposthume in his bladder. His patience encreased with his pain. I saw plainly he could not live long. It was a great trouble to me, that my mother-in-law kept me from him as much as she could, and infused into him such a displeasure against me, that I was much afraid lest he should die in it. I took a little interval of time, when she happened not to be with him, and drawing near his bed, I knelt down and said to him, " That if ever I had done any thing that displeased him I begged his pardon, assuring him it had not been voluntary." He appeared very much affected, and as he was just come out of a sound sleep, he said to me, " It is I who beg your pardon. I did not deserve you." After that time he was not only pleased to see me, but gave me advice what I should do after his death, not to depend on the

people on whom I now depended. He was for eight days very resigned and patient, though on account of the prevailing gangrene, he was cut and opened with a lance. I sent to *Paris* for the most skilful surgeon : But when he arrived my husband was dead.

No mortal could die in a more christian disposition, or with more courage than he did, after having received the sacrament in a manner truly edifying. I was not present when he expired ; for out of tenderness he had made me retire : he was above twenty hours without sense, in the agonies of death. Thou didst order, oh my GOD, that he should die on *Magdalene's* eve, to shew me that I was to be wholly thine. I renewed every year, on *Magdalene's* day, the marriage-contract which I had made to thee my LORD : And I found myself at that time free to renew it, and that most solemnly. It was in the morning on the 21st of July, 1676, that he died. Next day I entered into my closet, in which was the image of my dear and divine spouse the LORD JESUS CHRIST. I renewed my marriage contract, and added thereto a vow of chastity, with a promise to make it perpetual, if M. BERTOT, my director should permit me to do it. After that I was so filled with great interior joy, which was so much the more new to me, as for a long time past I had been plunged in the deepest bitterness.

As soon as I heard that my husband had just expired, " oh my GOD, I cried, Thou hast broken my bonds, and I will offer thee a sacrifice of praise." After that I remained in a deep silence, both exterior and interior, quite dry and
without

without any support. I could neither weep nor speak. My mother-in-law said very fine things, and was very much commended for it by every one. They were offended at my silence, which they attributed to want of resignation. A friar told me, that every one admired the fine acts which my mother-in-law did ; that as for me, they heard me say nothing ; that I must sacrifice my loss to God ; but I could not say one single word, let me strive as I would.

I WAS indeed very much spent ; for tho' I was but newly delivered of my daughter, yet I attended and sat up with my husband four and twenty-nights before his death. I was more than a year after, in recovering the fatigue, joined to my sore weakness and pains both of body and of mind. The depression, or dryness and stupidity which I was in, was such that I could not say a word about God ; it bore me down in such a manner, that I could hardly speak. However I entered for some moments into the admiration of thy goodness, oh my God, who had rendered me free, exactly on the day that I had taken thee for my spouse. I saw well that my crosses would not fail, since my mother-in-law had survived my husband. Also I was still tied, in having two children given me in so short a time before my husband's death ; which has evidently appeared the effect of divine wisdom ; for had I had only my eldest son left, I should have put him to the college ; and then have gone into the convent of the *Benedictines*, and so stolen myself from the designs of God upon me.

I WAS

I WAS willing to shew the esteem I had for my husband, in causing the most magnificent funeral to be made for him, at my own expence, that had ever been seen in that country. I paid off the legacies he had left. My mother-in-law violently opposed every thing I could do for securing my own interests. I had nobody to apply to for advice or help ; for my brother would not give me the least assistance. I was ignorant of affairs : But GOD, who, independant of my natural understanding, had always made me fit for every thing that pleased him, supplied me with such a perfect intelligence herein, that I succeeded. I omitted not the least punctilio, and was surprized that in these matters I should know without ever having learned. I digested all my papers, and regulated all my affairs, without the least assistance from any one. My husband had abundance of writings deposited in his hands. I took an exact inventory of them, and sent them severally to their owners, which, without divine assistance, would have been very difficult for me ; because, my husband having been a long time sick, every thing was in the greatest confusion. This gained me the reputation of a skilful woman, as well as another affair which fell out thus.

A GREAT number of persons, who had been at law for several years, applied to my husband to settle their affairs. Tho' it was not properly the business of a gentleman, yet they applied to him, because he had both understanding and probity ; and as he had a love for several of them he consented. There were twenty actions one upon another, and in all twenty-two persons concerned, who could not get any end put to their

their differences, by reason of new incidents continually falling out. My husband charged himself with getting lawyers to examine their papers, but died before he could make any procedure therein. After his death I sent for them to give them their papers: but they would not receive them, begging of me that I would accommodate them, and prevent their ruin. It appeared to me as ridiculous as impossible to undertake an affair of so great consequence, and which would require so long a discussion: Nevertheless relying on the strength and wisdom of God, I followed the movement he gave me to consent thereto. I shut myself up about thirty days in my closet, for all these affairs, without ever going out, but to mass and meals. The arbitration being at length prepared, they all signed it without seeing it. They were all so well satisfied therewith, that they could not forbear publishing it every where. It was God alone who did those things; for when I had no more to do with those affairs, I knew nothing about them; and if I now hear any talk of such things, to me it sounds like Arabic.

My friends, and persons of the greatest distinction in the country, now came to advise me to remove from my mother-in-law: For tho' I never complained of her, every one knew her humour. I answered that I should account it my place and duty to stay with her, if she would permit me. The view that was given me was not to go from the cross. Wherefore I resolved neither to leave my mother-in-law, nor put away the girl I have spoken of.

I HOPE

I HOPE, sir, you will excuse me for writing in so little order. I cannot do otherwise, on account of so many different things I have to mention, which I can only recite as they present themselves.

C H A P. XXIII.

THIS chapter is only a detail of her interior hardships and sufferings during the time of total privation, as also great part of the 24, 25, 26, and 27th chapters, in which the like accounts often recur. The abridged account given in the 21st, may suffice on this head ; yet all such particulars, as appear worthy of fresh notice in these chapters, shall be recited in their proper order.

C H A P.

C H A P. XXIV.

BEING now a widow my crosses, which one would have thought should have abated, increased. That turbulent domestic I have so often mentioned, instead of growing milder, now she depended on me, became more furious than ever. In our house she had amassed a good fortune, and I settled on her, besides, an annuity for the remainder of her life, for the services she had done my husband. She swelled with vanity and haughtiness. Having been used to sit up so much with an invalid, she had taken to drink wine, to keep up her spirits. It had now passed into a habit. As she grew aged and weak, a small matter got into her head. I tried to hide this fault ; but it grew to that height that it could not be concealed. I spoke of it to her confessor, in order that he might try, softly and artfully, to reclaim her from it ; but instead of profiting by her director's advice, she was outrageous against me. My mother-in-law, who could hardly bear that fault, and had often spoken to me about it, now joined in reproaching me, and vindicating her. This strange creature, when any company came, would cry out with all her might, " that I had dishonoured her, thrown her into despair, and would be the cause of her damnation, as I was taking the ready course to my own : " Yet at this time God gave me an unbounded patience. I answered only with mildness and charity all her passionate invectives, giving her besides every possible mark of my affection. If any other maid came to wait on me, she would draw her back

back in a rage, crying out, that “ I hated her on account of the affection with which she had served my husband.” When she had not a mind to come, I was obliged to serve myself ; and when she did come, it was to chide and make a noise. When I was very unwell, as was often the case, this girl would appear to be in despair. From hence I thought it was from thee oh LORD, that all this came upon me ; for without thy permission, she was scarce capable of such unaccountable conduct. She seemed not sensible of any faults, but always to think herself in the right. All those whom thou hast made use of to cause me to suffer, thought they were rendering service to thee in so doing.

I WENT to PARIS on purpose to see Monsieur BERTOT, who had been of very little service to me as a director. Not knowing my state, and I incapable of telling him it, he grew weary of the charge. At length he threw it up, and writ to me to take another director. I made no doubt but GOD had revealed to him my wicked state ; and that desertion of me seemed a most certain mark of my reprobation. This was during the life of my husband. But now my renewed solicitations, and his sympathy with me on my husband’s death, prevailed on him to resume my direction, which to me still proved of very little service. I went to PARIS on purpose to see him. When there, I went twelve or fifteen times to him, without being able to tell him any thing of my condition : I told him indeed I wanted some ecclesiastic to educate my son, to rid him of his bad habits, and of the wrong impressions he had conceived against me. He found one for me,

me, of whom he had received very good recommendations.

I WENT to make a * retreat with M. BERTOT, and Mad. de C. He spoke to me all the time not a quarter of an hour at most. As he saw that I said nothing to him, for indeed I knew not what to say, as I had not spoke to him of the favours which the LORD had conferred on me; (not from a desire to conceal them, but because the LORD did not permit me to do it, as he had over me only the designs of death) he therefore spoke to such as he looked upon to be more advanced in grace, and let me alone as one for whom there was nothing to be done. So well did GOD hide from him the situation of my soul, in order to make me suffer, that he wanted to refer me to certain considerations, thinking I had not the spirit of prayer, and that Mrs. GRANGER was mistaken in me when she told him I had. I did what I could to obey him, but to me it was entirely impossible. On this account I was displeased with myself, because I believed M. BERTOT rather than my own experience. Through this whole retreat my inclination, which I discerned only by the resistance I made to it, was to rest in silence and nakedness of thought; but in the settling of my mind therein I feared I was disobeying the orders of my director: And this made me think that I was decayed and fallen off from grace. I kept myself in my state of

* Many of the pious romanists retire a day, a week, or a month on some fixed season—secluding themselves intirely from all worldly business and connections, in order to give up their whole time and heart to GOD in prayer, and this they call a retreat.

of nothingness, content with my poor low degree of prayer, without envying the higher one of others, which I judged myself unworthy of. I would have however desired much to do the will of God; and to advance more to please him, but despaired altogether of ever attaining that desirable end.

THERE was, in the place where I lived, one whose doctrine was suspected *; he possessed a dignity in the church, which obliged me to have a deference for him. As he presently understood how averse I was to all who were suspected of unsoundness in the faith, and supposed that I had some credit in that place, he used his utmost efforts to engage me in his sentiments. I answered him with so much clearness and energy, that he had not a word to reply. This increased his desire to win me over, and in order to it to contract a friendship with me. He continued to importune me two years and a half. As he was very polite, of an obliging temper, and had a good share of wit, I did not mistrust him, but even conceived a hope of his conversion, in which I found myself mistaken. I then ceased going near him. He came to enquire why he could see me no more. At that time he was so agreeable to my sick husband, in his assiduities about him, that I could not avoid his conversation; though I thought the shortest and best way for me would be to break off all acquaintance with him, which I did after the death of my husband, for M. BERTOT would not permit me to do it before: Therefore, when he now saw that he could not renew it, he raised
up

* Most probably of JANSENISM.

strong persecutions against me, and stirred up those of his party.

THESE gentlemen had at that time a method amongst them, by which they soon knew who were of their party, and who were opposite; They sent to one another circular letters, by means of which, in a very little time, they cried me down on every side, after a very strange manner. Yet this gave me little trouble. I was glad of my new liberty, intending never again to enter into an intimacy with any one, which would give me so much difficulty to break off.

THE inability I was now in, of doing those exterior acts of charity I had done before, served this person with a pretext to publish that it was owing to him I had formerly done them; and that, having broke off from him, I now quitted them. Willing to ascribe to himself the merit of what GOD alone, by his grace, had made me do, he went so far as to preach of me publicly, as one who had been a bright pattern to the town, but was now become a scandal to it. Several times he preached very offensive things. And though I was present at those sermons, and they were enough to weigh me down with confusion, for they offended all that heard them;¹ I could not be troubled at it, for I carried in myself my own condemnation beyond utterance. I thought I merited abundantly worse than all he could say of me, and that, if all men knew me, they would trample me under their feet. My reputation then was blasted by the industry of this ecclesiastic: He caused all such as passed for persons of piety to declare against me. I
thought

thought he and they were in the right, and therefore quietly bore it all. Confused like a criminal that dares not lift up his eyes, I looked upon the virtue of others with respect. I saw no fault in others, and no virtue in myself. When any happened to praise me it was like a heavy blow struck at me, and I said in myself, "They little know my miseries, and from what state I have fallen." When any blamed me, I agreed to it, as right and just. Nature wanted sometimes to get out of such an abject condition, but could not find any way : And if I tried to make an outward appearance of righteousness, by the practice of some good thing, my heart in secret rebuked me as guilty of hypocrisy, in wanting to appear what I was not ; and God did not permit that to succeed. Oh, how excellent are the crosses of Providence ! All other crosses are of no value.

I WAS often very ill, and in danger of death, and knew not what to do to prepare myself for it. Several persons of piety, who had been acquainted with me, writ to me about those things which the gentleman (above hinted at) spread about me, and I did not offer to justify myself, though I knew myself innocent of the things whereof they accused me. One day being in the greatest desolation and distress, I opened the New Testament, and chanced to meet with these words, " My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness : " Which for a little time gave me some relief.

C H A P. XXV.

MY GOD took from me all the sensibility which I had for the creatures, or things created, even in an instant, as one takes off a robe, in such sort that after that time I had none for any whatsoever. Though he had done me that favour for which I can never be sufficiently grateful; I was however neither more contented nor less confused by it. My GOD seemed to be so estranged, and displeased with me, that there remained nothing but the grief of having lost his blessed presence through my fault. The loss of my reputation every day increasing, (by means of that gentleman's party whom I have mentioned,) became more sensible to my heart, though I was not allowed to justify or bewail myself.

As I became always more impotent for every kind of exterior works, as I could not go to see the poor, nor stay at church, nor practice prayer, and as I became colder towards GOD, in proportion as I was more sensible of my wrong steps, all this destroyed me the more both in my own eyes and in those of others. There were in the mean time some very considerable gentlemen who made proposals for me, and even such persons as according to the rules of fashion ought not to think of me. They presented themselves, during the very depth of my outward and inward desolation. At first it appeared to me a means of drawing me out of the vexation I was in. But it seemed to me then, notwithstanding my pains of body and mind, that if a King had presented himself to me, I should have refused him with pleasure, to shew thee

thee, oh my God, that with all my miseries I was resolved to be thine alone; and that if thou wouldst not accept of me, I should at least have the consolation of having been faithful to thee, to the utmost of my power. For as to my inward state I never mentioned it to any body: I never spoke thereof, nor of the suitors, though my mother-in-law would say, "If I did not marry, it was "because none would have me." It was sufficient for me that thou, oh my God, knewest that I sacrificed them to thee, (without saying a word to any body) especially one whose high birth and amiable exterior qualities might have tempted both my vanity and inclination. Oh could I but have hoped, through those sacrifices and heavy afflictions to become agreeable to thee, such a hope would have been like a change from hell to heaven. But so far was I from presuming to hope for it, that I feared this sea of affliction might also be followed by everlasting misery, in the loss of thee. I durst not desire to enjoy thee, I only desired not to offend thee.

I WAS for five or six weeks at the last extremity. I could not take any nourishment. A spoonful of broth made me faint. My voice was so gone that when they put their ears close to my mouth, they could scarcely distinguish my words. I threw up to the very chyle of my stomach. I could see no hopes of salvation, yet could not be unwilling to die, as I bore a strong impression that the longer I should live the more I should sin. Of the two I thought I rather chose hell than sin. All the good, which God made me do, now seemed to me evil, or full of faults. All my prayers, penances, alms and charities, seemed to rise up against me, and heighten my condemnation. I
thought

thought there appeared on the side of God, on my own, and from all creatures, one general condemnation, my conscience was a witness against me, which I could not appease; yet what may appear strange, the sins of my youth did not then give me any pain at all. They did not rise up in judgment against me, but there appeared one universal testimony against all the good I had done, and all the sentiments of evil I had entertained. If I went to confessors, I could tell them nothing of my condition; and if I could have told them, they could not have understood it. They would have regarded as eminent virtues, what, oh my God, thy eyes all pure and chaste rejected as infidelity. It was then that I felt the truth of what thou hast said, that *thou judgest our righteousness*. Oh how pure art thou! Who can comprehend it? It was then that I turned my eyes on every side, to see what way succour might come to me; but my succour could come no way but from him who made heaven and earth. As I saw there was no safety for me, or spiritual health in myself, I entered into a secret complacency in seeing no good in myself whereon to rest, or presume for salvation. The nearer my destruction appeared, the more I found in God himself, wherewith to augment my trust and confidence, notwithstanding he seemed so justly irritated against me. It seemed to me that I had in JESUS CHRIST all that was wanting in myself. Oh, Holy JESUS! I was *that lost sheep of the House of Israel, whom thou wast come to save*: Thou wast come to save her who could find no salvation out of thee. Oh ye stout and righteous men! Observe as much as ye please of excellence in what ye have done to the glory of God. As for me,
I only

I only glory in my infirmities, since they have merited for me such a SAVIOUR !

ALL my troubles, joined to the loss of my reputation, which yet was not so great as I apprehended, (it being only amongst a party) rendered me so unable to eat, that it seemed wonderful how I lived. In four days I did not eat as much as would make one very moderate repast. I was obliged to keep my bed through mere weakness, my body being no longer able to support the burden laid upon it. If I had thought, known, or heard tell, that there had ever been such a state as mine, it would have exceedingly relieved me : But my very pain appeared to me to be sin. Spiritual books, when I tried to read them, all contributed only to augment it ; for I saw in myself none of those degrees which they set down. I did not so much as comprehend them. And when they treated of the pains of certain states, I was very far from attributing any of them to myself. I said to myself, “ These persons feel the pains of divine operations ; but “ as to me, I sin, and feel nothing but my own “ wicked state.” I could have wished to separate the sin from the confusion of sin, and provided I had not offended God, all would have been easy to me.

SEE here a slight sketch of my last miseries, which I am glad to let you know, because in their beginning I omitted many infidelities, having had too much of an earnest attachment, vain complaisance, unprofitable and tedious conversations, though self-love and nature made a sort of necessity for them ; but toward the latter
part

part I could not have borne a speech too human, nor the least thing of the kind. God by an apparent evil purified me from the real evil. Might not I then well sing with the church, "O happy sin, which has obtained such a Redeemer for me!"

C H A P. XXVI.

THE first religious person that God made use of to draw me to himself, to whom (according to his desire) I writ from time to time, wrote to me in the depth of my distress, desiring me to write to him no more, signifying his disapprobation of what came from me, and that I displeased God greatly. A father, a Jesuit, who had esteemed me much, wrote to me in like manner. No doubt, it was by thy permission, they thus contributed to compleat my desolation. I thanked them for their charity, and commended myself to their prayers. It was then so indifferent to me to be decried of every body, even of the greatest saints, that it added but little to my pain. The pain of displeasing God, and the strong propensity I felt in myself to all sorts of faults, caused still my most lively and sensible pain.

I had been accustomed from the beginning to dryness and to privation*. I even preferred

* For those unacquainted with the Lives and Writings of such deeply interior persons as Lady GUION, it may be particularly necessary, to throw in a few observations on this passage. She here treats of that severe purification,

ed it to the state of abounding, because I knew that I must seek GOD above all. I had even,
at

rification, which precedes the total renewal of the soul in GOD,—its restoration to *all* it had lost in Adam; a state which the old Puritans called *transformation*, which the Mystics commonly call *the unitive state*, which some at present, term, *the state of sanctification*, and which, in the Scriptures is also explained by different appellations, and strongly expressed by St. PAUL—*The fullness of the stature of the new man in CHRIST JESUS*. The whole spiritual process, including this state of purification, is comprehended in the following extract from a late celebrated writer. “At first,” says he, “divine grace acts upon us differently, by motives of self-interest, and attracts by celestial delectation, or inward remorses. It discovers to us by turns, the beauty of virtue, or the deformity of vice, the punishments that attend crimes, and the pure delights that are to be enjoyed in a future immortality. Fear and hope act in us alternately. Sometimes the soul is filled with a sacred horror for its present state, a bitter anguish for its infidelities, and a true desire of satisfying divine justice. At other times, truth shows itself to the mind with all its charms, draws it with soft smiles and endearing caresses, enchants us with noble ideas, and celestial sensations. Then we attach ourselves to the love of virtue, by the sweetness that accompanies it, from a view of the recompence that attends it; and by the natural invincible love of happiness. Grace makes use of our natural dispositions and faculties, to convert the soul to its supernatural object as beautifying. It is thus that we renounce all the delusions of sense, gather in our scattered powers that were dispersed upon things without us, and retire into our spiritual natures, there to study our own hearts, and be acquainted with ourselves. This is true conversion, and the beginning of wisdom.

“After this, grace proceeds to another operation, less delectable, but more purifying. It is then we discover

at the first beginnings, an instinct of the innermost of my soul to pass over every manner of thing

“ discover by degrees, all the labyrinths and windings
 “ of the heart, all the refined passions of self-love, its
 “ usurpations upon the rights of the Deity, its idolatrous
 “ complacency in its own virtues, and the secret pride
 “ by which it referred them all to itself. To humble
 “ and cure it of this spiritual self-attribution, by which
 “ the devils fell, crosses from within and from without
 “ besiege it, temptations of all kinds molest it ; the imagination seems unhinged ; the passions, which it
 “ thought extinguished, return upon it with more violence than ever ; all the sources of spiritual consolation
 “ are dried up. It can rejoice no more in its sublime
 “ ideas, noble sentiments, and shining virtues. Like
 “ gold purified in the fire, the central operations of divine justice and love, throws up from the bottom of
 “ the soul to the surface, all its natural impurity, dross
 “ and corruption : All its faculties seem darkened and
 “ depraved ; it feels for a long time its natural impotence, immense void, and absolute nothingness, and
 “ the horrible solitude of a soul exiled from the divine
 “ presence, that can neither take pleasure in the creatures, nor in itself.

“ In fine, if the soul continues faithful in a total abnegation of all outward and inward pleasure ; of all
 “ spiritual and terrestrial concupisance, of all corporal
 “ and selfish delectation, it dies to its natural life, it
 “ is evacuated of self, elevated above self, disengaged
 “ from self, becomes truly regenerated, and breathes
 “ a new life hid with CHRIST in GOD, who invests
 “ it, dwells in it, and becomes its life, light and love.
 “ It is then that it enters into the HOLY OF HOLIES,
 “ that it becomes a living temple of the most High, partakes of the royal priesthood and offers up a perpetual
 “ holocaust of praise, love, and adoration, while it practises externally all the virtues and duties of its station. The first of these three operations detaches
 “ us from terrestrial objects : the second disengages us
 “ from

thing whatsoever, and to leave the gifts to run after the giver. But at this time my spirit and senses were in such a manner struck, by thy permission, oh my GOD, who wast pleased to destroy me without mercy, that the farther I went, the more every thing appeared to me a sin; even crosses appeared to me no more crosses but real faults. I thought I drew them all on myself
by

“ from false *self-love*: the third transforms us into the “divine image.”

Now the worst consequences may arise from our mistaking the degree of our spiritual advancement, and which alas too frequently happens: for the heart of man deceitful above all things, and prone to seize on every shadow for its own vindication, is ready to comfort and flatter itself, on every return of coldness and apathy to divine matters, that such a state is similar to that which our author mentions in this chapter. But beware, O reader, let not thy cold and barren soul, take refuge under the plausible supposition of inevitable dryness and aridities. For if thou yet harbourest one vice, one darling secret sin, or indulgest one carnal appetite, passion or temper; if thou cleavest to the world, heapest up riches, or seekest after honour or applause, if thou hast not like her, trampled upon, and abandoned all, and persevered for a length of time, wholly a stretch for the kingdom and glory of God, until a living and intimate sense of his divine presence abide in thee. I say, if thou hast not experienced all this, and yet find thy heart in a cold lifeless state of dry sterility, attempt not to compare it, nor flatter thyself that it is at all similar to that state of radical purification, which our author describes in this chapter.

WITH regard to those drynesses and distractions, to which the generality of Christians are subject, and which arise from infidelity, unwatchfulness and sin, the reader is referred to the author's treatise on prayer, which is subjoined to this work.

by my imprudent words and actions. I was like those, who, looking through a coloured glass, behold every thing with the same dye with which it is stained. Had I been able to do any exterior actions as formerly, or penances for my evil, it would have relieved me; but, I was forbidden to do the latter, beside, I grew so timorous, and felt in myself such a weakness, as made it appear impossible for me to do them; I looked on them with horror, I found myself now so weak and incapable of any thing of the kind.

METHINKS I omit many things, both of providences of GOD in my favour, and of rugged paths through which I was obliged to pass: But as I have only one general view, I leave them in the knowledge of GOD only. Afterwards, being forsaken of my director, the coldness towards me which I remarked in the persons conducted by him, gave me no more trouble, nor indeed the estrangement of all the creatures, on account of my inward humiliation. My brother also joined with those who exclaimed against me, even tho' he had never seen them before. I believe it was GOD who conducted things this way, for my brother has worth, and undoubtedly thought he did well in acting thus.

I WAS obliged to go about some business to a town where some near relations of my mother-in-law lived. How did I find things changed here! When I was there before, they entertained me in a most elegant and obliging manner, regaling me from house to house with emulation: But now they treated me with the utmost contempt, saying, they did it to revenge
what

what I made their relation suffer. As I saw the thing went so far, and that notwithstanding all my care and endeavours to please her, I had not been able to succeed, I resolved to come to an explanation with her. I told her, "that there was a current report that I treated her ill, tho' I made it my study to give her every mark of my esteem. If the report was true, I desired her to allow me to remove from her; for that I would not choose to stay to give her pain, but only with a quite contrary view." She answered very coldly, "I might do what I would; for she had not spoken about it, but was resolved to live apart from me." This was fairly giving me my discharge, and I thought of taking my measures privately to retire. As I had not, since my widowhood, made any visits but such as were of pure necessity, or charity, there were found too many discontented spirits, who made a party with her against me; while God required of me an inviolable secrecy of all my pains, both exterior and interior. There is nothing which makes nature die so much, as to find neither support nor consolation. In short I saw myself obliged to go out, in the middle of winter, with my children and my daughter's nurse. At that time there was no house empty in the town. The *Benedictines* offered me an apartment in theirs.

I WAS now in a great straight; on one side fearing least I was shunning the cross, on the other side thinking it unreasonable to impose my stay on one to whom it was only painful. Besides what I have related of his carriage, which still continued; when I went into the country to take a little repose, she complained that I left her

her alone. If I desired her to come thither she would not. If I said, "I durst not ask her to come, for fear of incommoding her, by changing her bed," She replied, "It was only an excuse, because I would not have her go; and that I only went to be away from her." When I heard that she was displeased at my being in the country, I returned to the town. Then she could not bear to speak to me, or to see me. I accosted her without making as if I saw how she carried it; but instead of making me any answer, she turned her head another way. I often sent her my coach, desiring her to come and spend a day in the country. She sent it back empty, without any answer. If I passed some days there without sending it, she complained aloud. In short, all I did to please her soured her, God so permitting it; for she had in the main a good heart, but was troubled with an uneasy temper: And I do not fail to think myself under much obligation to her.

BEING with her on *Christmas* day, I said to her with much affection. "My mother, on this day was the King of *peace* born, to bring it to us, "I beg *peace* of you in his name." I think that touched her, tho' she would not let it appear. The Ecclesiastic, whom I had with me at home, far from strengthening and comforting me, did nothing but weaken and afflict me, telling me that I ought not to suffer certain things. I had not credit enough to discharge any domestic, however defective or culpable. As soon as any of them were warned to go away, she sided with them, and all her friends interfered in it. As I was ready to go off, one of my mother-in-law's friends, a man of worth, who had always an esteem

teem for me, without daring to shew it, having heard it, was much afraid lest I should leave the town; for the removal of my alms, he thought, would be a loss to the country. He resolved to speak to my mother-in-law, in the softest manner he could; for he knew her. After he had spoken to her, she said, "She would not put me away, but if I would go she would not hinder me." After this he came to see me, and desired me to go and make an excuse to her, in order to content her. I told him, I should be willing to make a hundred, tho' "I did not know about what; that I did it continually about every thing, which made her uneasy. But that was not now the matter, for I made no complaint of her, but thought it not proper for me to continue with her, to give her pain; that it was but just that I should contribute to her ease." However he went with me into her room. Then I told her, "That I begged her pardon, if ever I had displeased her in any thing, that it had never been my intention to do it; that I desired her, before this gentleman, who was her friend, to tell me wherein I had given her any offence." Here God permitted, that she made a declaration of the truth in his presence. She said, "She was not a person to suffer herself to be offended; that she had no other complaint against me but that I did not love her, and that I wished her dead." I answered her, "That these thoughts were far from my heart, so far from it, that I should be glad, by my best care and attendance on her, to prolong her days: that my affection was real, but that she never would be persuaded

" to

" to believe it, whatever testimonies I could
 " give, so long as she hearkened to people who
 " spoke to her against me; that she had with
 " her a maid, who, far from shewing me any
 " respect, treated me ill, so far as to push me
 " when she wanted to pass by: She had done it
 " at church; making me give way to her with
 " as much violence as contempt, several times
 " also in my chamber grating me with her
 " words; that I had never complained of it;
 " because such a temper might one day give her
 " trouble." She took the girl's part: Never-
 " theless we embraced one another, and it was
 left so. Soon after, when I was in the country,
 this maid, having me no more to vent her cha-
 grins on, behaved in such a manner to my mo-
 ther-in-law as she could not bear. She immedi-
 ately upon it, put her out of doors. I must say
 here on my mother-in-law's behalf, that she had
 both sense and virtue, and except certain faults,
 which persons who do not practise prayer are lia-
 ble to, she had good qualities. Perhaps I caused
 crosses to her without intending it, and she to
 me without knowing it. I hope what I write will
 not be seen by any who may be offended with it,
 or who may not be in a condition of seeing these
 matters in God.

THAT gentleman who had used me so ill, for
 breaking off my acquaintance with him, among
 his penitents had one who, for affairs which be-
 fell her husband, was obliged to quit the coun-
 try. He himself was accused of the same things
 of which he had so liberally and unjustly accused
 me, and even of things much worse, and with
 more noise and outcry. Though I well knew all
 this, God granted me the favour never to make

his downfall the subject of my discourse ; never to open my lips about it. On the contrary, when any spoke to me of it, I pitied him, and said what I could in mitigation of his case. And God governed my heart so well, that it never offered to go into any vain joy at seeing him overtaken, and opprest, with those kind of evils which he had been so assiduous in endeavouring to bring upon me. And though I knew that my mother-in-law was informed of it all, I never spoke to her about it, or about the sad confusions he had caused in a certain family. I did not lay hold on the opportunity to mention any thing of the wrong he had done me. I only answered her in a few words without blaming him ; as God required of me such a silence about my crosses, for more than sixteen years, that my lips seemed sealed in every thing that regarded them.

C H A P. XXVII.

ONE day during my husband's life time, loaden with sorrow, and not knowing what to do, I wished to speak to a person of distinction and merit, who came often into the country, and passed for one deeply interior. I wrote to request an opportunity with him, for that I wanted his instruction and advice: But soon after I felt remorse for it: And this voice sprung in my heart, "What,—dost thou seek for ease, "and to shake off my yoke?" Hereupon I instantly sent a note again to desire him to excuse me, adding, "That what I had wrote was only "from *self-love*; and not necessity; that as he "knew what it was to be faithful to God, I hoped "he would not disapprove my acting with this "christian simplicity." Yet he resented it, which surprized me much, as I had conceived a high idea of his virtue. Virtues he has, but such as are full of the life and activities of nature, and unacquainted with the paths of mortification and death. Thou, oh my God, hast been my conductor even in these paths, as with admiration I have discovered since they are past. Blessed be thy Name for ever. I am obliged to bear this testimony to thy goodness.

BEFORE I continue my narration, I must add one remark, which the LORD gave me to make upon the way by which he, in his goodness, was pleased to conduct me; which is, that this obscure path is the surest to mortify the soul, as it leaves it not any prop to lean upon for support. Though it has no application to any particular
state

state of JESUS CHRIST ; yet, at its coming out, it finds itself clothed with all his dispositions and divine states, having truly put on CHRIST. The impure and selfish soul, is hereby purified, as gold in the furnace. Full of its own judgment, and its own will before, but now obeys like a child, and finds no other will in itself. Before, it would have contested for a trifle : Now it yields at first, not with reluctance and pain, by way of practising virtue, but as it were naturally. Its own vices are vanished. This creature so vain before now loves nothing but poverty, littleness and humiliation. It preferred itself above every body, now every body above itself, having a boundless charity for its neighbour, to bear with his faults and weaknesses, in order to win him by love, which before it could not do but with very great constraint. The rage of the wolf is changed to the meekness of the lamb.

DURING all the time of my experiencing my miseries and my deep trials, I went after no fine sights or recreations. When others went, I stayed at home. I wanted to see and know nothing but JESUS CHRIST. My closet was my only diversion. Even when the queen was near me, whom I had never seen, and whom I had desire enough to see ; I had only to open my eyes, and look out to see her ; yet did not do it. I had been fond of hearing others sing : And yet I was once four days with one who passed for the finest voice in the world, without ever desiring her to sing ; which surprized her, because she was not ignorant that, knowing her name, I must know the charming excellence of her voice. However, I committed some infidelities, in enquiring what others said of me by way of blame. I met with
one

one who told me every thing. And though I shewed nothing of it, it served only to mortify me, as I saw I was yet too much alive to self, and that *self-love* and nature had put me upon this enquiry.

I SHOULD never be able to express the number of my miseries ; but they are so vastly surmounted by the favours of GOD, and so swallowed up in these that I can see them no more. One of the things which gave me most pain in the seven years I have spoken of, especially the five last, was so strange a folly of my imagination that it gave me no rest. My senses bore it company in such sort that I could no more shut my eyes at church : And thus having all the gates and avenues open, I was like a vineyard exposed, because the hedges which the father of the family had planted were torn away. I saw then every one that came and went, and every thing that passed in the church. For the same force, which had drawn me inward to recollection, seemed to push me outward to dissipation.

LOADEN with miseries of all sorts, weighed down with oppressions, and crushed under continual crosses, I thought of nothing else but ending my days thus. There remained in me not the least hope of ever emerging out of so distressing a state : But notwithstanding I thought I had lost grace for ever, and the salvation which it merits for us, I longed at least to do what I could for GOD, though I feared I should never love him ; and seeing the happy state from whence I had fallen, I wished in gratitude to serve him, though I looked on myself as a victim doomed to destruction. Sometimes the view
of

of that happy period caused secret desires to spring up in my heart, of recovering it again; but I was instantly rejected and thrown back into the depth of the abyss, from whence I could scarcely utter a sigh; I judged myself to be in a state which was due to unfaithful souls. I seemed, oh my God, as if I was for ever cast off from thy regard, and from that of all creatures. By degrees my state ceased to be painful. I became even insensible to it, and my insensibility seemed like the final hardening of my reprobation. My coldness appeared to me a mortal coldness. And it was truly so, oh my God, since I thus died to self, in order to live wholly in thee, and in thy precious love, as I am going to relate.

To resume then my history, a servant of mine wanted to become a BARNABITE. I wrote about it to Father DE LA MOTHE; he answered me, that I must address Father LA COMBE, who was then the superior of the BARNABITES of TONON. That obliged me to write to him. I had always preserved secret respect and esteem for him, as one under grace. I was glad of this opportunity of recommending myself to his prayers. I wrote to him about my fall from the grace of God, and that I had requited his favours with the blackest ingratitude; that I was miserable, and a subject worthy of compassion; and that, far from having advanced towards God, I was become entirely alienated from him. He answered me in such a manner, as if he had known, by a supernatural light, notwithstanding the frightful description I had given of myself, that my condition was of grace. But I could not then believe it.

IN

IN the midst of my miseries * GENEVA came into my mind, in a singular manner, which caused me many fears. “What, said I, to complete my reprobation, shall I go to such an excess of impiety, as to quit the faith through apostacy? (The inhabitants of GENEVA being generally Protestants or Calvinists.) Am I then about quitting that church, for which I would give a thousand lives? Or, shall I ever depart from that faith which I would even wish to seal with my blood?” I had such a distrust of myself, that I durst hope for nothing, but had a thousand reasons for fear, after the experience I had of my weakness. Nevertheless the letter, which I had received from Father LA COMBE, in which he wrote me an account of his present disposition, somewhat similar to mine, had such an effect, as to restore peace and calmness to my mind. I felt myself inwardly united to him, as to a person of great fidelity to the grace of GOD. Afterwards a woman appeared to me in a dream to be come down from Heaven, to tell me that GOD demanded me at GENEVA.

ABOUT eight or ten days before MAGDALEN’S day, 1680, it came into my mind to write to father LA COMBE, and to request him, if he received my letter before that day, to pray particularly

* GENEVA, a city of Savoy, and capital of the territory of Geneva; it is situated near the confines of France and Switzerland on the river Rhone, at the west end of the famous lake of Geneva, and is the great resort of the Calvinists from France, and other nations for education, it having been the place of Calvin’s residence, and his disciples having had the dominion of that city ever since.

ticularly for me. And it was so ordered, contrary even to my expectations, that he received my letter on St. MAGDALEN's eve, and when praying for me the next day, it was said to him, thrice over, with much power, "Ye shall both dwell in one and the same place," he was very much surprized, as he never had received interior words before. I believe, oh my GOD, that that has been much more verified, both in our inward sense and experience, and in the same crucifying adventures which have befallen us, pretty much alike ; and in thyself, who art our dwelling, than in any temporal abode : For, though I have been for some time in the same country with him, and thy Providence has furnished us with some opportunities of being together, yet it appears to me, that it is much more verified in the former, as we both have had the like experience of JESUS CHRIST crucified.

C H A P. XXVIII.

ON that happy *Magdalenc's* day, my soul was perfectly delivered from all its pains. It had already begun since the receipt of the first letter from FATHER LA COMBE, to recover a new life: It was then indeed only like that of a dead person raised, though not yet unbound from his grave-clothes: But on this day I was, as it were, in perfect life, and set wholly at liberty. I then found myself as much raised above nature, as before I had been depressed under its burden. I was inexpressibly overjoyed to find him, whom I thought I had lost for ever, returned to me again with unspeakable magnificence and purity. It was then, oh my GOD, that I found again in thee with new advantages, in an ineffable manner, all I had been deprived of: And the peace I now possessed was all holy, heavenly and inexpressible; all I had enjoyed before was only a peace, the gift of GOD, but now I received and possessed the GOD OF PEACE; yet the remembrance of my past misery, still brought a fear upon me, lest nature should find means to take to itself any part therein. As soon as it wanted to see or taste any thing, the spirit ever watchful crossed and repelled it. I was far from elevating myself then, or attributing to myself any thing of this new state: For my experience made me sensible what I was.

I HOPED I should enjoy this happy state for some time, but little did I think my happiness so great and immutable as it was. If one may judge of a good by the trouble which precedes it, I leave mine to be judged of, by the sorrows

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I had

I had undergone before my attaining to it. The Apostle PAUL tells us, that "the sufferings of this life are not to be compared with the glory that is prepared for us." How true is that even of this life? One day of this happiness was worth more than years of suffering. It was indeed at that time well worth all I had undergone, though it was then only dawning. An alacrity for doing good was restored to me, greater than ever. It seemed to be all quiet, free and natural to me. At the beginning this liberty was less extensive; but as I advanced it grew still greater. I had occasion to see Mon. BERTON for a few moments, and just told him, I thought my state much changed, having scarce time to tell him any more. He seeming attentive to something else, answered, "No." I believed him; for grace taught me to prefer the judgment of others, and rather believe them than my own opinions or experience. This did not give me any kind of trouble; for every state seemed equally indifferent so I had the favour of God. I felt a kind of beatitude, every day increasing in me. I did all sorts of good, without selfishness, or premeditation. Whenever a self reflective thought was presented to my mind, it was instantly rejected, and as it were a curtain in the soul drawn before it. My imagination was kept so fixed, that I had now very little trouble on that head. I wondered at the clearness of my mind and purity of my whole heart.

I RECEIVED a letter from Father LA COMBE, wherein he wrote that God had discovered to him that he had great designs in regard to me, "Let them be, *then said I to myself*, either of justice "or mercy, all is equal to me." I still had
Geneva

Geneva deeply at heart ; but said nothing of it to any body, waiting for GOD to make known to me his all-powerful will, and fearing lest any stratagem of the devil should be concealed therein, that might tend to draw me out of my proper place, or steal me out of my condition. The more I saw my own misery, incapacity and nothingness, the plainer it appeared that they rendered me fitter for the designs of GOD, whatever they might be. “ Oh my LORD, said I, take the weak and the “ wretched to do thy works, that thou mayest “ have all the glory of them, and that man may “ attribute nothing of them to himself. If thou “ shouldest take a person of eminence and great “ talents, one might attribute to him something “ thereof : But if thou takest me, it will be manifest that thou alone art the author of whatever “ good shall be done.” I continued quiet in my spirit, leaving the whole affair to GOD, being satisfied, if he should require any thing of me, that he would furnish me with the means of performing it. I held myself in readiness with a full resolution to execute his orders, whenever he should make them known, though it were to the laying down of my life. I was released from all crosses, I resumed my care of the sick, and dressing of wounds, and GOD gave me to cure the most desperate. When surgeons could do no more, or were going to cut off limbs, it was then that GOD made me cure them.

OH the joy that accompanied me every where, finding still, him who had united me to himself, in his own immensity and boundless vastitude ! Oh how truly did I experience what he said in the Gospel, by the four Evangelists, and by one
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of them twice over, "Whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it; and whosoever will save his life shall lose it."

WHEN I had lost all created supports, and even divine ones, I then found myself happily compelled to fall into the pure divine, and to fall into it, through all those very things which seemed to remove me further from it. In losing all the gifts, with all their supports, I found the GIVER. In losing the sense and perception of thee in myself—I found thee, oh my GOD, to lose thee no more in thyself, in thy own immutability. Oh poor creatures, who pass along all your time in feeding on the gifts of GOD, and think therein to be the most favoured and happy, how I pity you if you stop here, short of the true rest, and cease to go forward to GOD himself, through the resignation of those very gifts which you now delight in.—How many pass all their lives this way, and think highly of themselves therein! There are others who being called of GOD to die to themselves, yet pass all their time in a dying life, and in inward agonies, without ever entering into GOD, through death and a total loss of self, because they are always willing to retain something under plausible pretexts, and so never lose themselves to the whole extent of the designs of GOD. Wherefore they never enjoy GOD in all his fulness; which is a loss that cannot perfectly be known till another life.

OH my LORD, what happiness did I not largely taste in my solitude, and with my little family, where nothing interrupted my tranquillity! As I was in the country, and the slender age of my children

children did not require my application too much, they being in good hands, I retired a great part of the day into a wood, where I passed as many days of happiness as I had had months of sorrow. Thou, oh my God, dealt by me as by thy servant Job, rendering me double for all thou hadst taken from me, and delivering me from all my crosses. Thou gavest me a marvellous facility to satisfy every one. What was surprizing now, was that my mother-in-law, who had ever been complaining of me, without my doing any thing more than usual to please her, declared now none could be better satisfied with me than she was. Such as before had cried me down the most, now testified their sorrow for it, and became full of my praises. My reputation was established with much more advantage, in proportion as it had appeared to be lost. I remained in an entire peace, as well without as within. It seemed to me that my soul was become like that new Jerusalem, spoken of in the *Apocalypse*, *prepared as a bride for her husband, and where there is no more sorrow, or sighing*. I had a perfect indifference to every thing that is here, and an union so great with the good will of God, that my own will seemed to be intirely lost. My soul could not incline itself on one side or other, since that another will had taken place of its own, but only nourished itself with the daily providences of God. It now found a will all divine, which yet was so natural and easy to it, that it found itself infinitely more free in this than ever it had been in its own.

THESE dispositions have still subsisted, and still grown stronger, and more perfect even to this hour. I could neither desire one thing nor
another,

another, but was content with whatever fell out, without making any reflection thereupon, or giving any attention thereto, except when any in the house asked me, "Will you have this, or that?" And then I was surprized to find that there was nothing left in me which could desire or choose. I was as if every thing, of smaller matters, quite disappeared, a higher power having taken up and filled all their room. I even perceived no more that soul which he had formerly conducted by his crook and his staff, because now he alone appeared to me, my soul having given up its place to him. It seemed to me, as if it was wholly and altogether passed into its God, to make but one and the same thing with him; even as a little drop of water, cast into the sea, receives the qualities of the sea. Oh union of unity, demanded of God by JESUS CHRIST for men, and merited by him. How strong is this in a soul that is become lost in its God! After the consummation of this divine unity, the soul remains *hid with CHRIST in GOD*. This happy loss is not like those transient ones, which extasy operates, which are rather an absorbment than union, for the soul afterwards finds itself again with all its own dispositions. But here she feels that prayer fulfilled—John xvii. 21. *That they all may be one as thou Father art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us.*

C H A P. XXIX.

I WAS obliged to go to PARIS about some business. Having entered into a church, that was very dark, I went up to the first confessor I found, whom I did not know, nor have ever seen since. I made a simple and short confession ; but to the confessor himself I said not a word. He surprized me much in saying, “ I know not who you are, whether maid, wife or widow ; but I feel a strong inward motion to exhort you to do what the LORD has made known to you, that he requires of you. I have nothing else to say.” I answered him, “ Father, I am a widow who have little children. What else could GOD require of me, but to take due care of them in their education ? ” He replied, “ I know nothing about this. You know if GOD manifests to you that he requires something of you ; there is nothing in the world which ought to hinder you from doing his will. One must leave one’s children to do that.” This surprized me much. However, I told him nothing of what I felt for GENEVA. I disposed myself submissively to quit every thing, if GOD required it of me. I did not look upon it a good I aspired to, or a virtue I hoped to acquire, or as any thing extraordinary, or as an act that would merit some return on GOD’s part ; but only gave myself up to be led in the way of my duty, whatever it might be, feeling no distinction between my own will and the will of GOD in me.

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IN this disposition, I lived with my family in the greatest tranquillity until one of my friends, had a great desire to go on a mission to SIAM. He lived twenty leagues from my house. As he was ready to make a vow to this purpose, he found himself stopped, and an impulse to come to speak to me. He came immediately, and as he had some reluctance to declare his mind to me, he went to read prayers in my chapel, hoping God would be satisfied with his making the vow, but as he was performing divine service in my hearing, he was stopped again. Whereupon he left the chapel to come to speak to me. He then told me his intention.

THOUGH I had no thought of saying any thing positive to him on that head, I felt an impression in my soul to relate to him my case, and the idea I had had of a long time past for GENEVA. I told him a dream I had had, which appeared to me supernatural, and had reference hereto: And when I had done, I felt a strong impulse to say to him, "You must go to SIAM. You must serve me in this affair. It is for that end God has sent you hither; I desire you to give me your advice." After three days, having considered the matter, and consulted God in it, he told me that he believed I was to go thither; but to be the better assured of it, it would be needful to see the Bishop of GENEVA; that if he approved of my design, it would be a sign that it was from God; if not, I must drop it. I fell in with his sentiment. He then offered to go to ANNECY*, to speak to the Bishop, and to bring me

* ANNECY, a city situate on a lake of the same name, 20 miles south of GENEVA. In this city was the residence of the Bishop of GENEVA.

me a faithful account of what they should agree on together. As he was advanced in years, we were deliberating what way he could take so long a journey, when there came two travellers, who told us the Bishop was at *Paris*. This I looked on as an extraordinary providence. He advised me to write to Father *La Combe*, and recommend the affair to his prayers, as he was in that country. He then spoke to the bishop at *Paris*; and I, having occasion to go thither, spoke to him also.

I TOLD him, "that my design was to go into the country, to employ there my substance, to erect an establishment for all such as should be willing truly to serve GOD, and to give themselves unto him without reserve; and that many of the servants of GOD had encouraged me thereto." The bishop approved of the design. He said, "there were new Catholics going to establish themselves at GEX*, and that it was a providential thing. I answered him, "that I had no vocation for GEX, but for GENEVA." He said, "I might go from hence to that city."

I THOUGHT this was a way which divine Providence had opened, for my taking this journey with the less difficulty. And as I yet knew nothing positive of what GOD would require at my hand, I was not willing to oppose any thing. "Who knows, said I, but the will of GOD is only that I should contribute to this establishment?"

* GEX, a town of FRANCE, 7 miles north-west of GENEVA.

I WENT to see the prioress of the new catholics at *Paris*. She seemed much rejoiced, and assured me she would gladly join me. As she is a great servant of GOD, this confirmed me : For when I could reflect a little, which was but seldom, I thought GOD would make choice of her for her virtue, and me for my worldly substance ; for when I inadvertantly looked at myself, I could not think GOD would make use of me : But when I saw the things in GOD, then I perceived the more I was nothing, the fitter I was for his designs. As I saw nothing in myself extraordinary, as I looked on myself in the lowest stage of perfection, and imagined that an extraordinary degree of inspiration was necessary for extraordinary designs, this made me hesitate, and fear deception. I did not yet sufficiently comprehend, that to follow, step by step, the guidance of divine Providence was the greatest and purest light. It was not that I was in fear of any thing, as to my perfection and salvation which I had referred to GOD ; but I was afraid of not doing his will by being too ardent and hasty in doing it. I went to consult Father CLAUDE MARTIN. At that time he gave me no decisive answer, demanding time for praying about it ; saying he would write to me what should appear to him to be the will of GOD concerning me.

I found it hard to get to speak to M. BERTOT, both on account of his being difficult of access, and of my knowing how he condemned things extraordinary, or out of the common road, beside his never having given me the least help in regard to my inward leadings : Yet, being my director, I submitted, against my own views or judgment, to what he said, laying down all my
own

own experiences when duty required me to believe and obey. I thought however, that in an affair of this importance, I ought to address myself to him, and prefer his sense of the matter to that of every one beside, persuaded he would infallibly tell me the will of GOD. I went to him then, and he told me that my design was of GOD, and that he had had a sense given him of GOD for some time past, that he required something of me. I therefore returned home to set every thing in order. I loved my children much, having great satisfaction in being with them, but resigned all to GOD to follow his will.

[Divers other circumstances she recites, and providential signs concurring to confirm her herein, of which those here given, and those which follow may be sufficient, as it might be tedious to the reader to go through every minute particular.]

AT my return from Paris, I left myself in the hands of GOD, resolved not to take any step, either to make the thing succeed or to hinder it, either to advance or retard it, but singly to move as he should be pleased to direct me. I had mysterious dreams, which portended nothing but crosses, persecutions and afflictions. My heart submitted to whatever it should please GOD to ordain. I had one which was very significant.

BEING employed in some necessary work, I saw near me a little animal which appeared to be dead. This animal I took to be the envy of some persons, which seemed to have been dead for some time. I took it up, and as I saw it strove hard to bite me, and that it magnified to the view of the eye, I cast it away ; but found thereupon
that

that it filled my fingers with sharp-pointed prickles like needles. I came to one of my acquaintance to get him to take them out ; but he pushed them deeper in, and left me so, till a charitable priest, of great merit, (whose countenance is still present with me, though I have not yet seen him, but believe I shall before I die) took this animal up with a pair of pincers. As soon as he held it fast, those sharp prickles fell off, of themselves. Then I found that I easily entered into a place, which before had seemed inaccessible. And tho' the mire was up to my girdle, in my way to a deserted church, I went over it, without getting any dirt. It will be easy to see in the sequel what this signified.

DOUBTLESS you will wonder that I, who make so little account of things extraordinary, relate dreams. I do it for two reasons ; first, out of fidelity, having promised to omit nothing of what should come into my mind ; secondly, because it is the method GOD makes use of to communicate himself to faithful souls, to give them foretokens of things to come, which concern them. Thus mysterious dreams are found in many places of the holy scriptures. They have singular properties, as

1st, To leave a certainty that they are mysterious, and will have their effect in their season ;

2d, To be hardly ever effaced out of the memory, though one forgets all others ;

3d, To redouble the certainty of their truth every time one thinks of them ; and

4th,

4th, They generally leave a certain unction, a divine sense or savour at one's waking. I received letters from sundry religious persons, some of whom lived far from me, and from one another, relating to my going forth in the service of GOD, and some of them to *Geneva* in particular, in such a manner as surprized me. One of them intimated that I must there bear the cross and be persecuted; and another of them that I should be eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, and arms to the maimed.

THE ecclesiastic, or chaplain, of our house was much afraid lest I was under a delusion: But what at that time greatly confirmed me was that Father *Claude Martin*, whom I mentioned above, writ to me that, after, many prayers, GOD had given him to know that he required me at GENEVA, and to make a free sacrifice of every thing to him. I answered him, "that perhaps GOD required of me nothing more than a sum of money to assist in a foundation which was going to be established there." He replied, that GOD had made him know that he wanted not my worldly substance but myself. At the very same time with this letter I received one from Father LA COMBE, who writ to me that GOD had given him a certainty, as he had done to several of his good and faithful servants and hand-maids, that he wanted me at GENEVA. The writers of these two letters lived above a hundred and fifty leagues from each other; and yet both writ the same thing. I could not but be somewhat surprized to receive at the same time two letters so exactly alike, from two persons living so far distant from each other.

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As soon as I became fully convinced of its being the will of God, and saw nothing on earth capable of detaining me, my senses had some pain about leaving my children. And upon reflecting thereon a doubt seized my mind. Oh my God ! Had I rested on myself, or on the creatures, I should have revolted ; and, as we read in the scriptures, *leaned on a broken reed, which would have pierced my hand.* But relying on thee alone, what needed I to fear ? I resolved then to go as a fool, regardless of the censures of such as understand not what it is to be a servant of God, and to receive and obey his orders. I firmly believed that he, by his Providence, would furnish the means necessary for the education of my children, and that in pure faith. I put every thing by degrees in order, God alone being my guide.

C H A P. XXX.

WHILST Providence, on the one hand, appointed my forsaking all things, it seemed on the other to make my chains the stronger, and my separation the more blameable ; for none could receive stronger marks of affection from an own mother than those which I received at this time from my mother-in-law ; even the least sickness which befell me made her very uneasy : She said, “ she had veneration for my virtue.” I believe what contributed not a little to this change was, that she had heard from one or other, that three persons had offered suit to me, and that I refused them, tho’ their fortune and quality was quite superior to mine. She remembered how she had upbraided me

me on this head, and I answered her not a word, whereby she might understand that it depended only on myself to marry to advantage. She began to fear lest such rigorous treatment, as hers had been toward me, might excite me to deliver myself, by such means, with honour from her tyranny, and was sensible what damage that might be to my children. So she was now very tender to me on every occasion.

I FELL extremely ill. I thought that God had accepted of my willingness to sacrifice all to him, and required that of my life. During this illness, my mother-in-law went not from my bed-side ; her many tears proved the sincerity of her affection. I was very much affected at it, and thought I loved her as my true mother. How then should I leave her now, being so far advanced in age ? The maid, who till then had been my plague, took an inconceivable friendship for me. She praised me every where, extolling my virtue to the highest ; and served me with extraordinary respect. She begged pardon for all that she had made me suffer, and died of grief after my departure.

THERE was a priest of merit, an inward man, who had fallen in with a temptation of taking on him an employ which I was sensible God did not call him to ; and therefore, fearing it might be a snare to him, I advised him against it. He promised me he would not, and yet accepted of it ; he then avoided me, joined secretly in calumniating me, gradually fell away from grace, and died soon after.

THERE was a Nun in a monastery I often went to, who was entered into a state of purification

cation which every one in the house looked on as distraction; and therefore they locked her up, which had like to have destroyed her. All that went to see her called it phrenzy or melancholy. I knew her to be devout. I requested to see her. As soon as I approached, I felt an impression of her state, being that of purification. I desired of the Superior, that she should not be locked up, nor people admitted to see her, but that she would confide her to my care; for I hoped things would change. I discovered that her greatest pain was at being counted a fool. I advised her to bear the state of foolishness, JESUS CHRIST had been willing to bear it before HEROD. This sacrifice gave her a calmness at once. But as GOD was willing to purify her soul, he separated her from all those things, to which she had had before the greatest attachment. At last, after she had patiently undergone her sufferings, her superior writ to me "that I was in the right, and that she was now come out of that state of dejection, in greater purity than ever." GOD gave to me alone at that time to know her state. This was the commencement of the Gift of discerning spirits, which I afterwards received more fully.

THE winter before I left home was one of the longest and hardest that had been for several years, viz. that of 1680. It was followed with extreme scarcity, which proved to me an occasion of exercising charity. My mother-in-law joined me heartily herein, and appeared to me so much changed, that I could not but be both surprized and overjoyed at it. We distributed at the house ninety-six dozen of loaves every week, but the private charities to the bashful poor were much greater. I kept poor boys and girls employed at work :
And

And God gave such blessings to my alms, that I did not find that my family lost any thing by it. Before the death of my husband, my mother-in-law told him, that I should ruin him with my charities, tho' he himself was so charitable, that in a very dear year, while he was young, he distributed a considerable sum; but now she repeated this to him so often, that he commanded me to set down in writing all the money I laid out, both what I gave for the expence of the house, and all that I caused to be bought, that from thence he might better judge of what I gave to the poor. This new obligation, which I was brought under, appeared to me so much the harder, as for above eleven years we had been married I never before had the like required of me. What troubled me most was the fear of having nothing to give to such as wanted. However I submitted to it, yet without retrenching any part of my charities. I did not indeed set down any of my alms, and yet my account of expences was found to answer exactly. I was much surprized and astonished at it, and esteemed it one of the wonders of providence, for I saw plainly it was but given out of thy treasury, oh my God, that mademe more liberal of what I thought was the LORD's, and not mine. Oh if we but knew how far charity, instead of wasting or lessening the substance of the donor, blessed, increased and multiplied it profusely; how much is there in the world of useless dissipation, which if properly applied, might amply serve for the subsistence of the poor, and would abundantly be restored, and amply rewarded to the families of those who gave it.

In the time of my greatest pains, some years after my husband's death (for they begun three
D d years

years before my widowhood, and lasted four years after) my footman came one day to tell me, for I was then in the country, that there was in the road a poor soldier dying. I made him be brought in, and having ordered a separate place to be made ready for him, I kept him above a fortnight. His malady was a flux, which he had taken in the army. It was so stinking and nauseous, that though the domesticks were charitably inclined, no body could bear to come near him. I went myself to take away his vessels. But never did I any thing of the kind which was so hard to me. When I emptied them, there was such an intolerable stench, that I was ready to faint. I frequently made efforts for a full quarter of an hour at a time. I seemed as if my very heart was going to come up ; yet I never desisted from doing it. I sometimes kept poor people at my house to dress their most putrid sores ; but never met with any thing so terrible as this. So the poor man, after I had made him receive his sacrament, died of it.

WHAT gave me now no small concern was the tenderness I had for my children, especially my younger son, whom I had strong reasons for loving. I saw him inclined to good ; and every thing seemed to favour the hopes I had conceived of him. I thought it running a great risque to leave him to another's education. My daughter I designed to take with me, though she was at this time ill of a very tedious fever. Providence was pleased however so to order it that she was timely recovered. The ties, with which God held me closely united to himself, were infinitely stronger than those of flesh and blood. The laws of my sacred marriage obliged me to give up all, to follow

low my spouse whithersoever it was his pleasure to call me after him. Though I often hesitated, and doubted much before I went, I never doubted after my going off, of its being his will; and though men, who judge of things only according to the success they seem to have, have taken occasion from my disgraces and sufferings, to judge of my calling, and to run it down as error, illusion and imagination; it is that very persecution, and the multitude of strange crosses it has drawn upon me, (of which this* imprisonment I now suffer is one,) which have confirmed me in the certainty of its truth and validity; nay, I am more than ever convinced that the resignation which I have made of every thing is in pure obedience to the divine will. The gospel effectually in this point shews itself to be true, which has promised to those that shall leave all for the love of God, *an hundred fold in this life, and persecutions also.* And have not I infinitely more than an hundred fold, in so entire a possession as thou, my God, hast taken of me; in that unshaken firmness which thou givest me in my sufferings, in a perfect tranquillity in the midst of a furious tempest, which assaults me on every side; in an unspeakable joy, enlargedness and liberty which I enjoy in a most straight and rigorous captivity. I have no desire that my imprisonment should end before the right time. I love my chains. Every thing is equal to me, as I have no will of my own, but purely the love and will of him who possesses me. My senses indeed have not any relish for such things, but my heart is separated from them, and borne over them: And my perseverance is not
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* She wrote this when confined in St. MARIE, in PARIS.

of myself, but of him who is my life; so that I can say with the Apostle, "It is no more I that live, but JESUS CHRIST that liveth in me. "It is he in whom I live, move, and have my being."

To return to the subject, from which I often wander without reflection. I say then that I was not so uneasy to go with the new catholicks, as to engage with them, not finding a sufficient attraction to the latter, though I sought for it, I longed indeed to contribute to the conversion * of wandering souls, and GOD made use of me to convert † several families before my departure, one of which was composed of eleven or twelve persons. Besides, Father LA COMBE had written to me, to make use of this opportunity for setting off, but did not tell me whether I ought to engage with them or not. Thus it was the providence of my GOD alone, which ordered every thing, to which I was resigned without any reserve: And that hindered me from engaging with them.

ONE day, thro' infidelity, reflecting humanly on this undertaking of mine, I found my faith staggering, weakened with a fear lest I were under a mistake, which slavish fear was increased by an ecclesiastic at our house, who told me it was
a rash

* N. B. But not to the persecuting of them, as she is falsely accused of.

† Some may be apt to call this change from Calvinism to the Romish Church *perversion* instead of *conversion*,—but this is through ignorance, and not distinguishing between the outward dead form, and the inward living power and grace, which may be enjoyed in every outward profession.

a rash and ill advised design. Being a little discouraged, I opened the bible, and at first met with this passage in ISAIAH, *Fear not thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel. I will help thee saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer the holy one of Israel.* Chap. lxi. 14. and near it, *Fear not ; for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name ; thou art mine : When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, &c.*

I HAD a very great courage given me for going, but could not persuade myself that it would be to settle with the new catholicks. It was however necessary to see sister *Garnier*, their Superior at *Paris*, in order to take our measures together : But I could not go to *Paris*, because that journey would have hindered me from taking another at the time when I should have been obliged to go off. She then, though much indisposed, resolved to come and see me. In what a wonderful manner, oh my God, didst thou conduct things by thy providence, to make every thing come to the point of thy will ! Every day I saw new miracles, which both amazed and still more confirmed me ; for with a paternal goodness thou tookest care of even the smallest things. As she intended setting off, she fell sick : And thou permitted it to fall out so, to give room thereby for a person, who would have discovered every thing, in the mean time to take a journey. As she had given me notice of the day she intended to set off, seeing that day was excessively hot, and so sultry that I imagined, that being taken so much tender care of as she was at home, they would not suffer her to begin her journey then, (which, really proved to be the case, as she afterwards told me) I prayed to the LORD to be pleased to grant a wind to rise,
to

to moderate the violent heat. Scarce had I prayed but there arose suddenly so refreshing a wind, that I was surprized at it : And the wind did not cease during her whole journey.

I WENT to meet her, and brought her to my country-house, in such sort that she was not seen or known of any body. What embarrassed me a little was, that I had two of my domesticks who knew her : But as I was then endeavouring the conversion of a lady, they easily believed that it was on this account I had sent for her, and that it was necessary to keep it secret, that the lady might not be discouraged from coming. Though I knew nothing of controversial points, yet GOD so furnished me that I did not fail to answer all her objections, and resolve all her doubts (to such a degree) that she could not but give herself up entirely to GOD. Though sister *Garnier* had a good share both of grace and natural understanding, yet her words had not such an effect on this soul as those with which GOD furnished me, as she assured me herself. She even could not forbear speaking of it. I felt a movement to beg her of GOD, as a testimony of his holy will concerning me ; and he was pleased to grant it, (though she did not make her abjuration till after my departure) willing that I should go off without any other assurance, than that his divine Providence was conducting all things. The sister did not declare her thoughts to me for four days. Then she told me she would not go with me. At this I was the more surprized, as I had persuaded myself that GOD would grant to her virtue what he might refuse to my demerits. Beside, the reasons she gave appeared to me to be merely human, and void of supernatural

tural grace. That made me hesitate a little: Then, taking new courage, through the resignation of my whole self, I said, "As I go not thither for your sake: I will not fail to go even without you." This surprized her, as she owned to me; for she thought that, on her refusal, I would decline my purpose of going.

I REGULATED every thing, wrote down the contract of association with them as I thought proper. No sooner had I done it, but I felt great perturbation and trouble of mind for it. I told her my pain, and that I had no doubt but God demanded me at GENEVA, yet did not let me see that he would have me to be of their congregation. She desired to have some time till after prayers and communion, and that then she would tell me what she thought God required of me. Accordingly he directed her contrary both to her interests and inclination. She then told me, "I ought not to connect myself with her, that it was not God's design; that I only ought to go with her sisters, and that when I should be there, Father LA COMBE, (*whose letter she had seen*) would signify to me the divine will." I entered at once into these sentiments, and my soul then regained the sweets of inward peace.

My first thought had been (before I heard of the new catholicks going to GEX) to go directly to GENEVA, as at this time there were catholicks there in service, and otherwise; and to take some little room without any noise, and without declaring myself at first: And as I knew how to make up all sorts of ointments, to heal wounds and especially the king's evil, of which there is abundance

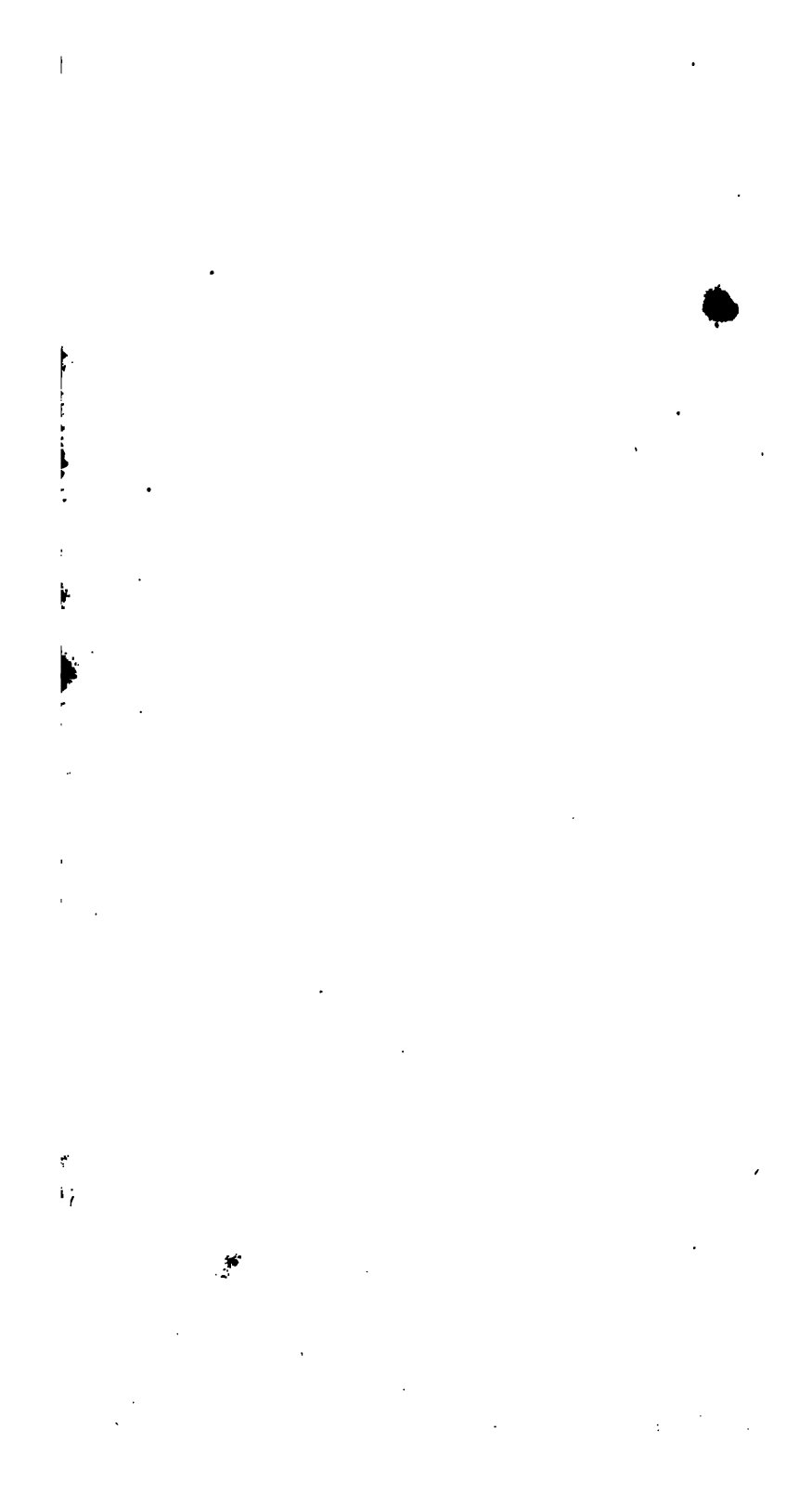
dance in that place, and for which I had a most certain cure, I hoped easily to insinuate myself by this way; and with the charities which I should have done to have won over many of the people. I have no doubt but, if I had followed this impulse, things would have succeeded better: But I thought I ought rather to follow the sentiments of the Bishop than my own. What am I saying? Has not thy eternal word, oh my GOD, had its effect and accomplishment in me? Man speaks as man: But when we behold things in GOD, we see them in far other lights. Yes my LORD, thy design was to give GENEVA not to my cares, words or works, but to my sufferings: For the more I see things appear hopeless, the more do I hope for the conversion of that city by a way known to thee only: Yes, oh GENEVA, thou shalt see the truth flourish again within thy walls, which error has banished from them: And very happily shall those words be verified in thy favour, which are inscribed on thy town-house: *After darkness light*; though now thy sons take them in a quite contrary sense. One day shalt thou be illuminated with the light of truth, and that beautiful temple of St. PETER shall again have the advantage of the pure gospel. How true is it in one sense, oh my LORD, that thou hast made me the daughter of the cross of GENEVA, and how heartily would I give my blood to see thy cross sprout up there! Father LA COMBE has told me since, that he had had a strong impulse to write to me, not to engage with the new catholicks; that he believed it not to be the will of GOD concerning me; but he omitted doing it. As to my director Mr. BERTOT, he died four months before my departure. I had some intimations of his death, and it seemed

seemed as if he bequeathed me a portion of his spirit to help his children.

I WAS seized with a fear, that the check I had felt, stripping myself (in favour of the new catholicks, of what I had designed for GENEVA) was a stratagem of nature, which does not love to be stripped. I wrote to sister GARNIER to get a contract drawn up according to my first memorial. God permitted me to commit this fault, to make me the more sensible of his protection over me.

END OF THE FIRST PART.

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THE LIFE

OF

LADY GUION.

PART II. CHAP. I.

I WENT off, in a strange renunciation, and in great simplicity, scarce able to render the reason of what made me in such a manner quit my family, which I most tenderly loved, being without any positive assurance, *yet hoping even against hope itself*. I went to the new Catholics at *Paris*, where providence wrought wonders to conceal me. They sent for the Notary, who had drawn up the contract of engagement. When he read it to me, I felt such a repugnance to it, that I could not bear to hear it to the end, much less sign it. The Notary wondered at it; and much more so, when Sister GARNIER came in, and told him herself, *that there needed no contract of engagement*.—I was enabled through divine assistance, to put my affairs in very great order, and to write sundry letters by the inspiration of the Spirit of God, and not my own spirit. This was what I had never experienced before. But

was

was given me at that time only as a beginning, and has since been granted me much more perfectly, as I shall relate in the sequel.

I HAD two domesticks, whom it was very difficult for me to discharge, as I did not think to take them with me. Yet if I had left them, they would have told of my departure; and I should have been sent after; as I was when it was known. But GOD so ordered it that they were willing to follow me: They were of no use to me, and soon after turned into *France*. I took with me only my little daughter, and two maids to serve us both. We set off in a boat upon the river, though I had taken places in the stage-coach, in order that, if they searched for me in it, they might not find me. I went to *Melun* * to wait for it there.

It was surprizing that, in this boat the child without adverting to what she did, could not forbear making crosses, employing a person to cut her bulrushes for that purpose. She then put round me, all over, above three hundred of them. I let her do it, and inwardly apprehended that it was not without its mystery. I felt an interior certainty that I was going to meet with crosses in abundance; and that this child was sowing the cross, for me to reap it. Sister GARNIER who saw, that they could not restrain her from covering me with crosses, said to me, "What that child does appears to be mysterious;" and turning to the little girl, she said, "give me some crosses

* *Melun* is a town on the river *Seyne*, 25 miles south-east from *Paris*.

"crosses too, my pretty pet;" "No, she replied, they are all for my dear mother;" but gave her one to stop her importunity, then continued putting more on me: After which she desired some river-flowers, which floated on the water, to be given her; and braiding a garland, she put it on my head, and said to me, "After the cross you shall be crowned." I admired all this in silence, and offered myself up to the pure love of GOD, as a victim, free and willing to be sacrificed to him. *

SOME time before my departure, a particular friend of mine, who is a true servant of GOD, related to me a vision she had had respecting me. "She saw my heart surrounded with thorns; that our Lord appeared in it well pleased; that, though the thorns seemed likely to tear it, yet, instead of doing that, they only rendered it fairer, and our Lord's approbation the stronger."

IN my way, at *Corbeil*,† I met with the priest whom GOD had first made use of, so powerfully to draw me to his love. He approved of my design to leave all for the LORD; but he thought I should not be well suited with the new Catholics. He told me some particular things about them, to shew that our leadings were incompatible. He gave me a caution not to let them know that I walked in the inward path; that, if I did, I must expect

* This little daughter lived to be married to the Count de Vaux, as we shall see in the third part, Chap. xi.

† *Corbeil*, a little town on the river Seyne, 16 miles south from Paris.

expect nothing but persecutions from them. But it is in vain to contrive to hide, when GOD sees it best for us to suffer, and when our wills are utterly resigned to him, and totally passed into his. Oh King of divine lovers! How didst thou strike on thyself, in all the justice of GOD: And this soul devoted to imitate, and be conformable to thee, being cloathed in thy righteous indignation against its own transgressions, strikes on itself in thy justice. Oh admirable thing, only known by experience!

AT *Paris* I gave the new Catholicks all the money I had. I reserved not to myself a single penny, rejoicing to be poor after the example of JESUS CHRIST. I brought from home nine thousand livres: As by my donation I had reserved none to myself, and by a contract lent them six thousand; this six thousand has returned to my Children but none of it to me, which gives me no trouble; for poverty, thus procured, makes my riches. The rest I gave entirely to the sisters who were with us, as well to supply their travelling expences, as for their beginning to buy furniture. I did not reserve so much as my linen for my own use, putting it in the common repository. I had neither a locked coffer, nor purse. I had brought but little linen for fear of mistrust; and lest, in wanting to carry off clothes, I should have been discovered. My persecutors have not failed to report that I had brought great sums from home, which I had imprudently expended, and given to the relations of father *La Combe*, which is as false, as it is true I had not a penny; and that, on my arrival at *Annecy*, a poor man asking alms, I, having nothing else, gave him the buttons from my sleeves. At another time I gave
a poor

a poor man a little ring, quite plain, in the name of JESUS CHRIST, which I had worn as a token of my marriage with him.

WE joined the flying stage at *Melun*, where I left sister *Garnier*, and went on with the other sisters, with whom I had no acquaintance. These carriages were very fatiguing, and I got no sleep through so long a journey, and though my daughter, a very tender child, only five years of age, got scarce any, yet we bore so great a fatigue without falling sick by the way; and this child had not an hour's uneasiness, though she was only three hours in bed every night; at another time, half this fatigue, or even the want of rest, would have thrown me into a fit of sickness. God only knows both the sacrifices which he induced me to make, and the joy of my heart in offering up every thing to him. Had I kingdoms and empires, methinks I should yield them up with still more joy, to give him the higher marks of my love.—But is it a quitting any thing to quit it for him?

As soon as we arrived at the inn, I went to church and stayed there till dinner time. In the coach my divine LORD communed with me, and in me, in a manner which the others could not comprehend, and indeed did not perceive; the cheerfulness I shewed, in the greatest dangers, encouraged them. I even sang hymns of joy at finding myself disengaged from the riches, honours and entanglements of the world. God in such a manner protected us that he seemed to be to us *a pillar of fire by night, and a pillar of a cloud by day*. We passed over a very dangerous

gerous spot between *Lyons* * and *Chambery*. Our carriage broke at coming out of it. Had it happened a little sooner, we must have perished.

WE arrived at *Annecy* on *Magdalene's* eve 1681 : And on *Magdalene's* day the bishop of *Geneva* performed divine service for us, at the tomb of *St. Francis de Sales*. There I renewed my spiritual marriage with my Redeemer ; as I did every year on this day. There also I felt a sweet remembrance of that Saint, with whom our LORD gives me a singular union. I say union : For it appears to me that the soul in GOD is united with the saints, and the more so as they are the more conformable to him : And it is an union of unity which it pleases GOD sometimes to revive, and awaken in the soul for his own glory ; at such times those saints are rendered more intimately present to that soul in GOD : And this revival is as it were an holy intercourse of friend with friend, in him who unites them *all* in one immortal tie. Generally all continues hid with JESUS CHRIST in GOD.

THAT day we left *Annecy* ; and on the next went to prayers at *Geneva*, at the house of the *French* resident. I had much joy at the communion ; and it seemed to me as if GOD more powerfully united me to himself. And there I prayed to him for the conversion of that great people. That evening we arrived late at *Gex*,
where

* *Lyons*, capital of *Lyonois*, at the confluence of the rivers *Rhone* and *Saone*, 225 miles S. E. from *Paris*, and 45 miles W. from *Chambery* the capital city of *Savoy*, which last is 45 miles S. from *Geneva*.

where we found only bare walls; though the Bishop of *Geneva* had assured us that the house was furnished, as undoubtedly he believed it to be. We lodged at the house of the sisters of the charity, who were so kind as to give us their beds.

I WAS in great pain of mind for my daughter, who visibly fell away. I had a strong desire to place her with the *Ursulines* at *Tonon*. My heart was so affected on her behalf, that I could not forbear weeping in secret for her in bed. Next day I said, "I would take my daughter to *Tonon*, and leave her there; till I should see how we might be accommodated here." They opposed it strongly, after a manner which seemed very hard-hearted as well as ungrateful, seeing she was just worn away to a skeleton. I looked upon the poor child as a victim, whom I had imprudently sacrificed. I wrote to Father LA COMBE, intreating him to come to see me, to consult together thereupon; thinking I could not in conscience keep her in this place any longer. Several days passed without my having any answer. In the mean time I became resigned to the will of God, whether to have succour or not.

CHAP. II.

OUR Lord who took pity on the lamentable condition of my daughter, so ordered it, that the Bishop of *Geneva* wrote to Father *La Combe*, to come as speedily as possible to see us, and to console us. As soon as I saw that father, I was surprized to feel an interior grace, which I may call COMMUNICATION; and such as I had never had before with any person. It seemed to me that an influence of Grace came from him to me, through the innermost of the soul; and returned from me to him, in such sort that he felt the same effect. Like a tide of grace it caused a flux and reflux, flowing on into the divine and invisible ocean. This is a pure and holy union, which God alone operates, and which has still subsisted, and even increased betwixt us. It is an union exempt from all weakness, and from all self-interest, which causes those, who are blessed with it, to rejoice in beholding themselves, as well as those beloved, loaden with crosses and afflictions; an union which has no need of the presence of the body; which at certain times absence makes not more absent, nor presence more present; an union unknown to all men but such as are come to experience it: Nor can it ever be experienced but betwixt such souls as are united to God. As I never before felt such an union of this sort with any one, it then appeared to me quite new, having never heard of the like. I had no doubt of its being from God; so far from turning the mind from him, it tended to draw it more deeply into him. It dissipated

pated all my pains, and established me in the most profound peace.

God gave him at first much openness toward me. He related to me the mercies God had shown him, and several extraordinary things, which gave me at first some fear. I suspected some illusion, especially in such things as flatter, in regard to the future; little imagining then, that God would make use of me to draw him from this state, and bring him into that of *naked faith*. But the grace, which flowed from him into my soul, recovered me from that fear, as I saw it joined with extraordinary humility; and that far from being elevated with the gifts which God had liberally conferred on him, or with his own profound learning, no person could have a lower opinion of himself than he had. He told me "As to my daughter, it would be best for me to take her to *Tonon*, where he thought she would be very well situated." And as to myself, after I had mentioned to him my dislike to the manner of life of the new Catholics, he told me, "that he did not think that it would be my proper place to be long with them; but that it would be best for me to stay there, free from all engagements, till God, by the guidance of his providence, should make known to me how he would dispose of me, and draw my mind to the place whither he would have me to remove." I had already begun to awake regularly at *midnight*, in order to pray. At this time I awoke with these words suddenly put in my mind, "It is written of me, I will do thy will, oh my God." This was accompanied with the most pure, penetrating, and powerful communication of grace that I had ever experienced.

enced. And here I may remark, that though the state of my soul was already permanent in newness of life ; yet this new life was not in that immutability in which it has since been. To speak properly, it was a beginning life and a rising day, which goes on increasing unto the full meridian ; a day never followed by night ; a life which fears death no more, not even in death itself ; because he who has suffered the first death, shall no more be hurt of the second. *From Midnight* I continued on my knees till four o'clock in the morning, in prayer, in a sweet intercourse with God, and did the same also the night following.

NEXT day, after prayers, Father *La Combe* told me, that he had had a very great certainty that I was a stone which God designed for the foundation of some great building. But what that building was he knew no more than I. After whatever manner then it is to be, whether his divine Majesty will make use of me in this life, for some design known to himself only, or will make me one of the stones of the new and heavenly JERUSALEM, it seems to me that such stone cannot be polished, but by the strokes of the hammer ; and that our LORD has given to this soul of mine the qualities of the stone, viz. firmness, a resignation, like insensibility, to endure hardness and the operations of his hand.

I CARRIED my little daughter to the *Ursulines* at *Tonon*. That poor child took a vast fondness for Father *La Combe*, saying, “ He is a good father, “ one from God.” Here I found a hermit, whom they called *Anselm*. He was a person of the most extraordinary sanctity, that had appeared for some time. He was from *Geneva* ; and God had miraculously

miraculously drawn him from thence, at twelve years of age. He had (with the permission of the Cardinal, at that time Archbishop of *Aix in Provence*) at nineteen years of age taken the habit of hermit of *St. Augustine*. He and another lived alone in a little hermitage, where they saw nobody but such as came to visit their chapel. He had lived twelve years in this hermitage, never eating any thing but pulse with salt, and sometimes oil. Three times a week he lived on bread and water. He never drank wine, and generally made but one meal in twenty-four hours. He wore for a shirt a coarse hair cloth, and lodged on the bare ground. He lived in a continual state of prayer, and in the greatest humility. God had done by him many signal miracles.

THIS good hermit had a great sense of the designs of GOD on Father *La Combe* and me. But GOD shewed him at the same time that strange crosses were preparing for us both, and that we were both destined for the aid of souls. I did not find, as I expected, any fit place for my daughter at *Tonon*. In regard to her, I thought myself like *Abraham*, when going to sacrifice his son.—Father *La Combe*, accosting me here, said, “welcome, daughter of *Abraham*!” I found little encouragement to leave her there, and could still worse keep her with myself, because we had no room; and the little girls, whom they took to make Catholicks, were all mixed with us, and had contracted such habits as were pernicious. To leave her there I thought not right. The language of the country, where scarce any one understood *French*, and the food, which she could not take, being so far different from ours, were great hardships. All my tenderness for her was
awakened,

awakened, and I looked on myself as her destroyer. I experienced what *Hagar* suffered when she put away her son *Ishmael* in the desert, that she might not be forced to see him perish. I thought, if I had ventured to expose myself, I ought at least to have spared my daughter ; as the loss of her education, and even of her life, appeared to me inevitable. Every thing looked black in regard to her,

I THOUGHT that, with her natural disposition and fine qualities, she might have shined and attracted admiration, if educated in France, and been likely to have such offers for marriage, as she could never hope to meet with in this poor country ; in which, if she should recover, she would never be likely to be fit for any thing. Here she could eat nothing of what was got for her. All her subsistence was only some spoonfuls of unpleasant and disagreeable broth, which I forced her to take against her will. I seemed like a second *Abraham*, holding the knife over her to destroy her. Our Lord would have me make a sacrifice to him, without any consolation, and plunged in sorrow, night was the time which gave vent to it. He made me see, on one side, the grief of her grand-mother, if she should hear of her death, which she would impute to my taking the child away from her ; and the great reproach it would be accounted among all the family. The gifts of nature she was endowed with were now like pointed darts which pierced me. I believe that GOD so ordered it, to purify me from too human an attachment, which was still so ready to stick close to me. For after I returned from the *Ursulines* at *Tonon*, they changed her

her manner of diet, and gave her what was suitable to her delicacy ; whereby, in a short time she recovered finely.

C H A P. III.

AS soon as it was known in *France* that I was gone, there was a general outcry. Those who attacked me with the most violence upon it, were the human spiritualists ; Father *de la Mothe* wrote to me, that all persons of learning, of piety, the gown and the sword, united in censuring me. To alarm me still more, he informed me that my mother-in-law, with whom I had trusted my younger son and my children's substance, was fallen into a state of childhood.— This however was very false.

I ANSWERED all these thundering letters as the spirit dictated. My answers were thought very just, and were well relished, whereby those violent exclamations were soon changed into applauses. Father *La Mothe* appeared to change his censures into esteem : but it did not hold long. Self-interest threw him back again ; being disappointed in his hopes of a pension, which he expected I would have settled on him. Also Sister *Garnier*, whatever was her reason, changed and declared against me.

HERE I both eat and slept little. The food which was given us was rotten and full of worms, by reason of the great heat of the weather, and being kept too long ; insomuch that what I should have formerly beheld with abhorrence now became my only nourishment ; and yet every thing
was

was rendered easy to me. In GOD I found, with increase, every thing which I had lost for him: That spirit, which I once thought I had lost in a strange stupidity, was restored to me with inconceivable advantages. I was astonished myself. I found there was nothing which it was not fit for, or in which it did not succeed. Those who observed it said, "I had a prodigious capacity." Though I well knew that I had but a poor one; but that in GOD my spirit had received a quality which it had never had before. I thought I experienced something of the state which the Apostles were in, after they had received the Holy Ghost. I knew, I comprehended, I understood, I was enabled to do every thing requisite. I had every sort of good thing, and no want of any thing. I remembered that fine passage of wisdom, *All good things came to me with her.* Wisdom of Sol. vii. 2. When JESUS CHRIST the eternal wisdom is formed in the soul, after the death of the first *Adam*, it finds in him all good things communicated to it.

SOME time after my arrival at *Gex*, the Bishop of *Geneva* came to see us. He was so clearly convinced, and so much affected, that he could not forbear expressing it. He opened his heart to me on what GOD had required from him. He confessed to me his own deviations and infidelity. Every time, when I spoke to him, he entered into what I said, and acknowledged it to be the truth; as indeed it was the spirit of truth which inspired me to speak to him, without which I should be only a mere simpleton. And yet as soon as persons who sought for pre-eminence, and could not suffer any good but what came from themselves, spoke to him, he was so weak as to let himself
be

be imposed on with impressions against the truth. This foible, with others, has hindered him from doing all the good, which otherwise he might have done in his diocese.

AFTER I had spoken to him, he said, " he had " it in his mind to give me Father *La Combe* " for director; for that he was a man illuminat- " ed of GOD, who well understood the inward " path, and had a singular gift of pacifying " souls." These were his own words. Greatly was I rejoiced, when the Bishop appointed him, seeing thereby his authority united with the grace which already seemed to have given him to me, by an union and effusion of supernatural life and love.—The fatigues I had, and watchings with my daughter, threw me into a violent disorder, attended with exquisite pains. The physicians judged me in danger, and yet the Sisters of the house quite neglected me; Especially her who had the care of the œconomy, she was so penurious, that she did not give me what was necessary to sustain life. I had not a penny to help myself with, as I had reserved nothing to myself. And beside, they at that time received all the money which was remitted me from *France*, which was very considerable. Thus I practised poverty, and was in necessity even among those to whom I had given all. They wrote to Father *La Combe*, desiring him to come to me, as I was so extreme ill. On hearing of my condition, he was so touched with compassion, as to walk on foot all night, it being eight great leagues, but he travelled no otherwise in that, as in every thing else endeavouring to imitate our LORD JESUS CHRIST*.

As

* Singularly devoted to GOD, and faithful to the
G g sight

As soon as he entered the house, my pains abated : And when he had prayed and blessed me, laying his hand on my head, I was perfectly cured, to the great astonishment of my physicians ; who were not willing to acknowledge the miracle ; being not well pleased, as they knew that we were come on a religious motive, and their sentiments and profession was so opposite to ours.—These sisters themselves advised me to go to my daughter, to take milk for a fortnight. Father *La Combe* returned with me. A violent storm arose on the lake, which made me very sick, and seemed likely to upset the boat. But the hand of providence remarkably appeared in our favour, so much that it was taken notice of by the mariners and passengers, who looked upon Father *La Combe* as a saint. Thus we arrived at *Tonon*, where I found myself so perfectly recovered, that, instead of making and using the remedies I had proposed, I went into a retreat, and stayed there twelve days. Here I made vows of perpetual *chastity*, *poverty* and *obedience*, to wit, readily to obey whatever I should believe to be the will of God, also to obey the church, and to honour JESUS CHRIST in such a manner as he pleased.

At this time I found that I had the *perfect chastity* of love to God, mine being without any reserve, division, or view of interest ;—*perfect poverty*, by the total privation of every thing that was

sight of duty, which, in the land of darkness, was given him, Father *La Combe* appears to have been a laborious good man in his station, not shunning the cross, or shrinking from persecutions ; and at last, for his fidelity thrown into prison, where, as far as appears, he ended his days.

was mine, both inwardly and outwardly ;—*perfect obedience to the will of GOD, submission to the church, and honour to JESUS CHRIST* in loving himself only ; the effect of which soon appeared. When by the loss of *ourselves* we are passed into GOD, and returned into our origin, our will is made one and the same with that of GOD, according to the prayer of CHRIST, “ As thou “ Father art in me, and I in thee, grant that “ they also may be one in us.” John xvii. 21. Oh but it is then that the will is rendered marvellous, both because it is made the will of GOD, which is the greatest of miracles ; and because it works wonders in him : For as it is GOD who wills in the soul, that will has its effect. Scarce has it willed but the thing is done.

WHY then, *may some say*, so many oppressions endured ? Why do not these souls, if they have such a power, set themselves free from them ? If they had any will to do any thing of that sort, and it were not granted ; that would be the *will of the flesh*, or the *will of man*, and not the *will of GOD*. John i. 13.

I ROSE constantly at midnight, ever waking timely enough to do it. If I wound up my alarm-watch, then I used not to wake in time. I saw that GOD had the care of a father and a spouse over me. When I had any indisposition, and my body wanted rest, he did not awake me ; but at such times I felt even in my sleep a singular possession of him. Some years have passed wherein I have had only a kind of half-sleep ; but my soul waked the more for GOD, as sleep seemed to steal from it every other attention. The LORD made it known also to many persons,
that

that he designed me for a mother of great people, but a people simple and child-like. They took these intelligences in a literal sense, and thought it related to some institution or congregation: But to me appeared nothing else, than the persons whom it pleased God that I should afterwards win over to him, to whom I should serve as a mother, through his goodness; giving them the same union of affection for me as that of children for a parent, but an union much deeper and stronger; and giving me all that was necessary for them, to bring them to walk in the way by which he would lead them, as I shall shew in the sequel, when I shall speak of that state of maternity, or motherhood.

C H A P. IV.

I WOULD willingly suppress what I am now about to write if any thing of it were my own, as well on account of the difficulty of expressing myself thereon, as because few souls are capable of leadings so little known, and so little comprehended, that I have never read of any thing like it.—I shall say something of the interior dispositions I was then in, if it serves you who are willing to be of the number of my children, and if it serves such as are already my children, to induce them to let God glorify himself in them after his manner, and not after their own, I shall think my pains well employed. If there be any thing which they do not comprehend, let them die to themselves, and they will find it much better by experience than from any thing I could say: For *expression* never equals *experience*.

AFTER

AFTER I had come out of the trying condition I have spoken of, I found it had purified my soul, instead of blackening it as I had feared. I possessed GOD after a manner so pure, and so immense, as nothing else could equal. In regard to thoughts or desires, all was so clean, so naked, so lost in the divinity, that the soul had no selfish movement, however plausible or delicate ; both the powers of the mind and the very senses being wonderfully purified. Sometimes I was surprised to find that there appeared not one thought. The imagination, formerly so restless, now no more troubled me : I had no more perplexity or uneasy reflections. The will, being perfectly dead to all its own appetites, was become void of every human inclination, both natural and spiritual, and only inclined of GOD to whatever he pleased, and in whatever manner he pleased. This vastitude, or enlargedness, which is not bounded by any thing, however plain or simple it may be, increases every day ; so that my soul in partaking of the qualities of her spouse, seems also to partake of his immensity. My prayer was in an openness and singleness inconceivable. I was as it were borne up on high, out of myself. I believe GOD was pleased to bless me with this experience, at the beginning of the new life, to make me comprehend, in favour of other souls, this passage of the soul into GOD.

WHEN I went to confess, I felt such an immersion of the soul into him, that I could scarcely speak. This ascension of the spirit, wherein GOD draws the soul so powerfully, not into its own inmost recess, but into himself, is not operated till after the *mystic death*, wherein the soul actually comes

comes out of itself to pass into its divine object. I call it *death*, that is to say, a *passage* from one thing to another: And it is truly a happy *passover* for the soul, and its *passage* into the promised land. The spirit which is created to be united to its own principle, (or origin) has so powerful a tendency to it, (*that is*, to God) that if it were not stopt by a continual miracle, its moving quality would cause the body to be drawn after it whithersoever it would, by reason of its impetuosity and noble descent: But God has given it a terrestrial body to serve for a counterpoise. This spirit then, created to be united to its origin, without any medium or interstice, feeling itself drawn by its divine object, tends to it with an extreme violence; in such sort that God, suspending for some time the power which the body has to hold back the spirit, it follows with ardency: But when it is not sufficiently purified to pass into God, it gradually returns back to itself; and as the body resumes its own quality, it turns to the earth. The saints who have been the most perfect have advanced to that degree, as to have nothing of all this; and some have lost it towards the end of their lives, becoming single and pure as the others, because they then had in reality and permanence, what they had at first only as transient fruitions, in the time of the prevalence or dominion of the body. It is certain then that the soul, by death to itself, passes into its divine object: And it is what I then experienced. I found, the farther I went, the more my spirit was lost in its Sovereign, who attracted it more and more to himself. And he was pleased at first that I should know this for the sake of others, and not for myself only. Indeed

deed he drew my soul more and more into himself, till it lost itself entirely out of sight, and could perceive itself no more. It seemed at first to pass into him. As one sees a river pass into the ocean, lose itself in it, its water for a time distinguished from that of the sea, till it gradually becomes transformed into the same sea, and possesses all its qualities ; so was my soul lost in GOD, who communicated to it his qualities, having drawn it out of all that it had of its own. Its life is an inconceivable innocence, not known or comprehended of those who are still shut up in themselves (or only live to themselves).

THE joy which such a soul possesses in its GOD is so great, that it experiences the truth of those words of the royal Prophet, "All they who are in thee, oh LORD, are like persons ravished with joy." To such a soul the words of our LORD seem to be addressed, "Your joy no man shall take from you." John xvi. 22. It is as it were plunged in a river of peace. Its prayer is continual. Nothing can hinder it from praying to GOD, or from loving him. It amply verifies these words in the *Canticles*, "I sleep but my heart waketh ;" for it finds that even sleep itself does not hinder it from praying. Oh unutterable happiness ! Who could ever have thought that a soul, which seemed to be in the utmost misery, should ever find a happiness equal to this ? Oh happy *poverty*, happy *loss*, happy *nothing*, which gives no less than GOD himself in his own immensity, no more circumscribed to the limited manner of the creature, but always drawing it out of that, to plunge it wholly into his own divine Essence.

THEN

THEN the soul knows that all the states of self-pleasing visions, openings, extasies and raptures, are rather obstacles, that they don't serve this state which is far above them; because the state, which has supports, has pain to lose them; and yet cannot arrive at this without such loss. In this are verified the words of an experienced Saint; "When I would, *says he*, possess nothing *through self-love*, every thing was given me *without going after it.*" Oh happy dying of the grain of Wheat, which makes it produce an hundred fold! The soul is then so passive, so disposed equally to receive from the hand of God either good or evil, as is astonishing. It receives both the one and the other without any selfish emotions, letting them flow and be lost as they come. They pass away as if they did not touch.

AFTER I finished my retreat with the *Ursulines* at *Tonon*, I returned through *Geneva*; and, having found no other means of conveyance, the *French* Resident lent me a horse. As I knew not how to ride on horseback, I made some difficulty of doing it: But as he assured me that it was a very quiet horse, I ventured to mount him. There was a sort of a Smith who looking at me with a wild haggard look, struck the horse a blow on the back, just as I had got upon him, which made him give a leap. He threw me on the ground with such force that they thought I was killed. I fell on my temple. My cheek bone was broke, and two of my teeth driven into my head. I was supported by an invisible hand: And in a little time I mounted as well as I could on another horse, and had a man by my side to keep me up.

My

My relations left me in peace at *Gex*, testifying their esteem for me : And as they had heard at *Paris* of my miraculous cure, it made a great noise there. Many persons in reputation for sanctity then wrote to me. I received letters from Mademoiselle *De Lamoignon*, and another young lady, who was so moved with my answer, that she sent me a hundred Pistoles for our house, and let me know beside, “ that, when we wanted “ money, I had only to write to her ; and that “ she would send me all I could desire.” They talked in *Paris* of printing an account of the sacrifice I had made, and inserting in it the miracle of my sudden recovery, I don’t know what prevented it ; But such is the inconstancy of the creature, that this journey, which drew upon me at that time so much applause, has served for a pretext for the strange condemnation which has since passed upon me.

C H A P. V.

MY near kinsfolks did not signify any eager desire for my return. The first thing they proposed to me, a month after my arrival at *Gex*, was not only to give up my Guardianship, but to make over all my estate to my children, and to reserve an annuity to myself. This proposition, coming from people who regarded nothing but their own interest, to some might have appeared very displeasing ; but it was in no wise so to me. I had not any friend to advise with. I knew not any one whom I could consult about the manner of executing the thing, as I was quite free and willing to do it. It appeared to me that I had now the means of accomplishing the

the extreme desire I had of being conformable to JESUS CHRIST, poor, naked, and stript of all. They sent me an article to execute, which had been drawn under their inspection, and I innocently signed it, not perceiving some clauses which were inserted therein. It expressed that, when my children should die, I should inherit nothing of my own estate, but that it should devolve to my collateral kindred. There were many other things, which appeared to be equally to my disadvantage. Though what I had reserved to myself was sufficient to support me in this place ; yet it was scarce enough to do so in some others. I then gave up my estate with more joy, for being thereby conformed to JESUS CHRIST, than they could have by it who asked it from me. It is what I have never repented of, nor had any uneasiness about. What pleasure to lose all and to quit every thing for GOD ! The love of poverty, thus contracted, is the kingdom of tranquillity.

I FORGOT to mention that, towards the end of my miserable state of privation, when just ready to enter into newness of life, our Lord illuminated me so clearly to see that the exterior crosses came from him, that I could not harbour any resentment against the persons who procured me them. On the contrary, I felt the tenderness of compassion for them, and had more pain for those which I innocently caused to them, than for any which they had heaped upon me. I saw that these persons feared GOD, too much to oppress me as they did, had they known it. I saw his hand in it, and I felt the pain which they suffered, through the contrariety of their humours. It is hard to conceive the tenderness which GOD gave me.

me for them, and the desire which I have had, with the utmost sincerity, to procure them every sort of advantage.

AFTER the accident which befell me, of the fall from the horse, from which I soon wonderfully recovered, the devil began to declare himself more openly mine enemy, to break loose and become outrageous. One night, when I least thought of it, something very monstrous and frightful presented itself. It seemed a kind of Face, which was seen by a glimmering blueish light*. I don't know whether the flame itself composed that horrible face or appearance; for it was so mixed and passed by so rapidly, that I could not discern it. My soul rested in its calm situation and assurance, and it appeared no more after that manner. As I rose at midnight to pray, I then heard frightful noises in my chamber, and after I had lain down they were still worse; my bed often shook for a quarter of an hour at a time, and the paper sashes were all burst. Every morning while this continued, they were found shattered and torn, yet I felt no fear. I rose and lighted my wax candle at a lamp which I kept in my chamber, because I had taken the office of *Sacristan*, or (*Vestry Nun*) and the care of waking the sisters at the hour they were to rise, without having once failed in it for my indispositions, ever being the first in all the observances: I made use of my little light to look all over the chamber, and at the sashes, at the very time the noise was strongest: As he saw that I was afraid
of

* Probably (says the translator) this was the contrivance of some evil minded persons to terrify her, perhaps the vile Ecclesiastic, whom she is just going to mention.

of nothing, he left off all on a sudden, and attacked me no more in person : But he stirred up men against me, and that succeeded far better with him ; for he found them disposed to do what he prompted them to, zealously, in as much as they counted it a good thing to do me the worst of injuries.

ONE of the sisters whom I had brought, a very beautiful girl, contracted an intimacy with an Ecclesiastic, who had authority in this place. At first he inspired her with an aversion for me, being well assured that if she placed confidence in me, I should advise her not to suffer his visits so frequently.—She was undertaking a religious retreat. That Ecclesiastic was desirous to induce her to make it, in order to gain her entire confidence which would have served as a cloak to his frequent visits. The Bishop of *Geneva* had given Father *La Combe* for director to our house, and as he was going to cause retreats to be made, I desired her to wait for him. As I had gained some share in her esteem, she submitted thereto, even against her inclination, which was to have made it under this Ecclesiastic.—I began to talk to her on the subject of inward prayer, and drew her into the practice of this duty. Our Lord gave such a blessing thereto, that this girl, (one of good parts) gave herself to God in right earnest, and with her whole heart : And the retreat completely won her over. She then became more reserved, and on her guard, towards this Ecclesiastic, which exceedingly vexed him. It enraged him both against Father *La Combe* and me.—This proved the source of the persecutions which afterwards befel me.—The noise in my chamber ended as that commenced.

• THIS

THIS Ecclesiastic, began to talk privately of me with much contempt. I knew it, but took no notice. There came a certain Friar to see him, who mortally hated Father *La Combe*, on account of his regularity. These combined together to force me to quit the house, and to become masters of it themselves. All the means they could devise they studied for that purpose.

My manner of life was such, that in the house I did not meddle in affairs at all, leaving the sisters to dispose of the temporals as they pleased. Soon after my entrance into it I received eighteen hundred livres, which a lady, a friend of mine, lent me to complete our furniture, which I had repaid her at my late giving up of my estate. This sum they received, as well as what I had before given them.—I sometimes spoke a little to those who retired thither to become Catholicks, and our Lord favoured with so much benediction what I said to them, that some, whom they knew not before what to make of, became sensible solid women, and exemplary in piety.

I SAW crosses in abundance likely to fall to my lot. At the same time these words came into my mind, “Who for the joy that was set before him endured *the cross*.” Heb. xii. 2. I prostrated myself for a long time with my face on the ground, earnestly desiring to receive all thy strokes, Oh thou who spared not thy own son! Thou couldst find none but him worthy of thee, and thou still findest in him hearts proper for thee.

A FEW days after my arrival at *Gex*, I saw in a sacred and mysterious dream (for as such I very well distinguished it) Father *La Combe* fastened
up

up to an enormous cross stripped, in like manner as they paint our Saviour. I saw round it a frightful crowd, which covered me with confusion, and threw back on me the ignominy of his punishment. He seemed to have most pain, but more reproaches than he. I have since beheld this fully accomplished.

THE aforesaid Ecclesiastic won over to his party one of our sisters who was the house-steward, and soon after the prioress. I was of a very delicate frame, but the good inclination which I had did not give strength to my body. I had two maids of my own with me to serve me: Yet as the community had need of one of them for their cook, and the other to attend the door and other occasions, I gave them up, not thinking but they would allow them to serve me sometimes, and assist me in things I was not able to do myself; for besides this, I let them still receive all my income they having had already my first half of this year's annuity: And yet they would not permit either of my maid-servants to do any thing for me. By my office of sacristan I was obliged to sweep the church which was large, and they would not let any one help me in it. I have several times fainted away over the broom, and have been forced to rest myself in little corners quite spent. This obliged me to beg them, that they would suffer it sometimes to be swept by some of the lusty country girls which were there, new catholicks, which at last they had the charity to consent to. But what most embarrassed me was that I never had washed, and was now obliged to wash all the vestry linen. I took one of my maids to help me because in attempting it by myself, I had done up the linen most awkwardly. But these sisters pulled

pulled her by the arms out of my chamber, telling her she should do her own business. I let it quietly pass, without making any objection to it. The other good sister, that girl I just mentioned, grew more and more fervent, by the practice of prayer in her dedication of herself to the LORD, more and more tender in her sympathy with me, which irritated this ecclesiastic; insomuch that, after all his impotent attempts here, he went off to *Annecy*, in order to sow discord, and to effect more mischief to Father *La Combe*.

C H A P. VI.

HE went directly to the Bishop of *Geneva*, who till then, had manifested much esteem and kindness for me, and persuaded him, “ that it “ would be proper to secure me to that house, “ to oblige me to give up to it the annual income “ I had reserved to myself; and to engage me “ thereto, by making me prioress.” He had gained such an ascendant over the Bishop, that the people in the country called him the *little Bishop*. Wherefore he drew him to enter heartily, and with zeal into this proposition, and to resolve to bring it about whatever it should cost him.

THE Ecclesiastic, having so far carried his point, and being swelled with his success in this first essay, no longer kept any measures in regard to me. He began with causing all the letters which I sent, and those which were directed to me, to be stopt; in order to have it in his power to make what impressions he pleased on the minds of others, and that I should neither be able to
know

know it, nor defend myself, nor to give or send to my friends any account of the manner in which I was treated. One of the maids I had brought wanted to return, as she could have no rest in this place, and the other that remained was infirm, and too much taken up by others to help me in any thing. As Father *La Cambe* was to come, I thought he would soften the violent spirit of this man, and that he would give me proper advice.

IN the mean time they proposed to me the engagement, and the post of prioress. I answered, "that as to the engagement it was impossible for me, since my vocation was elsewhere. And I could not regularly be the prioress, till after passing through the noviciate, in which they had all served two years before their being engaged; that when I should have done as much I should see how God would inspire me." The prioress replied pretty tartly, "that if I would ever leave them it were best for me to do it immediately." Yet I did not offer to retire, but continued still to act as usual. However I saw the sky gradually thickening, and storms gathering on every side. The prioress then affected a milder air. She assured me, "that she had a desire, as well as I, to go to *Geneva*; that I should not engage, but only promise her to take her with me, if I went thither." She pretended to place a great confidence in me, and professed a high esteem for me. As I am very free, and have nothing but uprightness, I let her know "that I had no attraction for the manner of life of the new catholics, by reason of the intrigues from without. Several things did not please me, because

“because I wanted them to be upright in every thing.” She signified, “that she did not consent to such things, but because that Ecclesiastic told her, they were necessary to give the house a credit in distant parts, and to draw charities from *Paris*.” I answered, “that if we walked uprightly God would never fail us. He would sooner do miracles for us.” I remarked to her, “that when, instead of sincerity, they had recourse to artifice, charity grew cold, and kept herself shut up. It is God alone who inspires charity : How then is it to be drawn by disguises?”

Soon after Father *La Combe* came about the retreats. (This was the third and last time that he came to *Gex*.) The prioress, after she had been tampering a good deal with me hereupon, having wrote him a long letter before his coming, and received his answer, which she shewed me, now went to ask him whether she would one day be united to me at *Geneva*. He answered with his usual uprightness, “Our Lord has made it known to me that you shall never be established at *Geneva*.” And soon after she died. When he had uttered this declaration, she appeared enraged against both him and me, after a surprizing manner. She went directly to that Ecclesiastic, who was in a chamber with the house-steward ; and they took their measures together, to oblige me either to engage or retire. They thought that I would sooner engage than retire, and they narrowly watched my letters.

He requested Father *La Combe*, which was only with a design to lay snares for him, to preach ; which he did on this text, “The King’s daughter

“is beautiful within.” That Ecclesiastic, who was present with his confidant, said, “It was preached against him, and was full of errors.” He drew up eight propositions, and inserted in them what the other had not preached, adjusting them as maliciously as ever he could, and sent them to one of his friends at *Rome*, to get them examined by the sacred congregation, and by the inquisition. Though he had very ill digested them, at *Rome* they were pronounced good. That greatly disappointed and vexed him. After having been treated in this manner, and opprobriously reviled by him in the most offensive terms, the father, with much mildness and humility told him, “that he was going to *Annecy* about some affairs of the convent; and that if he had any thing to write to the Bishop of *Geneva*, he would take care of his letter.” He desired him then to wait a while, as he was going to write. The good father had the patience to wait above three hours, without hearing from him; though the other had treated him exceedingly ill, so far as to snatch out of his hands a letter I had given him for that worthy hermit I have mentioned. Hearing he was not gone, but was still in the church, I went to him, and begged him to send to see if the other’s packet was ready; because the day was so far gone, that he would be obliged to lodge by the way. When the messenger arrived, he found a servant of the Ecclesiastic on horseback, ordered to go full speed, to be at *Annecy* before the father. He then returned an answer, “that he had no letters to send by him.” This was so contrived, that he might gain time to prepossess the Bishop for his purposes. Father *La Combe* then set off for *Annecy*, and on his arrival found the Bishop prepossessed,

essed, and in an ill humour. This was the substance of the discourse which they had :

Bishop. “ You must absolutely engage this lady to give what she has to the house at *Gen*, and make her the prioress of it.”

F. La Combe. “ My Lord, you know what she has told you herself of her vocation, both at *Paris* and in this country. I therefore do not believe that she will engage ; nor is there any likelihood that, after having quitted her all, in the hope of entering *Geneva*, she should engage elsewhere, and thereby put it out of her power to accomplish the designs of God in regard to her. She has offered to stay with those sisters as a boarder. If they are willing to keep her as such, she will remain with them, if not, she is resolved to retire into some convent, till God shall dispose of her otherwise.”

Bishop. “ I know all that ; but I likewise know that she is so very obedient, that, if you order her, she will assuredly do it.”

F. La Combe. “ It is for that reason, my Lord, that one ought to be very cautious in the commands which they lay on her : Can I induce a foreign lady, who, for all her subsistence, has nothing but a small pittance she has reserved to herself, to give that up in favour of a house which is not yet established, and perhaps never will ? If the house happen to fail, or be no longer of use, what shall that lady live on ? Shall she go to the hospital ? And indeed this house will not long be of any use, “ since

“ since there are no protestants in any part of
“ *France* near it.”

Bishop. “ These reasons are good for nothing,
“ If you do not make her do what I have said, I
“ will degrade and suspend you.”—This manner
of speaking somewhat surprized the father, who
well enough understands the rules of suspen-
sion, which is not executed on such things. He
replied,

“ My Lord, I am ready, not only to suffer the
“ suspension, but even death, rather than do any
“ thing against my conscience.”—Having said
that, he retired.

He directly sent me this account by an express,
to the end that I might take proper measures
thereon. I had no other course to take but to
retire into a convent. I received a letter inform-
ing me that the Nun to whom I had entrusted
my daughter was fallen sick, and desiring me to
go to her for some time. I shewed this letter to
the sisters of our house, telling them, “ I had a
“ mind to go ; but that if they ceased to perse-
“ cute me, and would leave Father *La Combe* in
“ peace, I would return as soon as the mistress
“ of my daughter should be recovered.” Instead
of this, they persecuted me more violently, wrote
to *Paris* against me, stopt all my letters, and sent
libels against me round the country.

THE day after my arrival at *Tonon*, Father *La*
Combe set off for the valley of *Aoust* * to preach
there

* *Aoust*, a Dutchy in *Piedmont*, at the foot of the
Alps,

there in the Lent. He had come to take leave of me, and told me, "he should go from thence to *Rome*, and perhaps not return, as his superiors might detain him there; that he was sorry to leave me in a strange country, without succour, and persecuted of every one." I replied, "My father, that gives me no pain, I use the creatures for God, and by his order. Through his mercy, I do very well without them, when he withdraws them: And I am very well content never to see you, if such is his will, and to abide under persecution." He said he went off well satisfied to see me in such a disposition, and then took his leave and departed.

As soon as I got to the *Ursulines*, a very aged and pious priest, who for twenty years past had not come out of his solitude came to find me. He told me, "that he had had a vision relative to me; that he had seen a woman in a boat on the lake; and that the Bishop of *Geneva*, with some of his priests, exerted all their efforts to sink the boat she was in, and to drown her; that he continued in this vision above two hours, with pain of mind; that it seemed sometimes as if this woman were quite drowned, as for some time she quite disappeared; but afterwards she appeared again, and ready to escape the danger, while the Bishop never ceased to pursue her. This woman was always equally calm; but he never saw her entirely free from him. From whence I conclude, added he, that the Bishop

Alps, in the North-east of *Italy*, 65 miles South-east of *Geneva*, and subject to the king of *Sardinia*.

"shop will perute you without intermission."

* I HAD an intimate friend, wife of that governor of whom I have made some mention. As she saw I had quitted every thing for GOD, she had a warm desire to follow me. With diligence did she dispose of all her effects, and settle her affairs, in order to come to me: But when she heard of the persecution, she was discouraged from coming to a place, from whence she thought I should be obliged to retire:—And soon after she died.

CHAP. VII.

AFTER Father *La Combe* was gone, the persecution raised against me became more violent. But the Bishop of *Geneva* still shewed me some civilities, as well to try whether he could prevail on me to do what he desired, as to sound how matters passed in *France*, and to prejudice the minds of the people there against me, always preventing me from receiving the letters sent me. The Ecclesiastic and his family had twenty-two intercepted letters, opened, on their table. There was one wherein was sent me a Letter of Attorney to sign, of immediate consequence. They were obliged to put it under another cover, and send it to me. The Bishop writ to Father *La Mothe*, and had no difficulty to draw him into his

* It appears, that she was an instrument in the LORD's hand, in this place, viz. *Tonon*, of great spiritual benefit to several young women of the village, from what she occasionally mentions farther on, viz. in Chap. 18.

his party. For he was displeased with me on two accounts: First, that I had not settled on him a pension, as he expected, and as he told me very roughly several times: And secondly, that I did not take his advice in every thing; beside some other interests he had in view. He at once declared against me. The Bishop made him his confidant: And it was he who uttered and spread abroad the news about me, which they sent him. They imagined, as was supposed, that I should annul the donation I had made, if I returned; that, having the support of friends, in *France*, I should find the means of breaking it; but in that they were much mistaken; for I had no thought of loving any thing but the poverty of JESUS CHRIST. For some time yet the Father acted with caution towards me. He wrote me some letters; which he addressed to the Bishop of *Geneva*, and they agreed so together, that he was the only person from whom I received any letters, to which I returned very moving answers; yet he, instead of being touched with them, became only more irritated against me.

THE Bishop continued to treat me with a shew of respect: And yet at the same time he wrote to many persons at *Paris*, as did also the Sisters of the house to all those persons of piety who had wrote letters to me, to bias them as much as possible against me, and to avoid the blame which ought naturally to fall upon them, for having so unworthily treated a person who had given up every thing to devote herself to the service of that diocese; for after I had done this, and was not in a condition to return to *France*, they treated me extremely ill in every respect. There was scarce any kind of false or fabulous story, likely
to

to gain any credit, which they did not invent to cry me down. Beside my having no way to make the truth known in *France*, our LORD inspired me with a willingness to suffer every thing, without justifying myself; so that in my case nothing was heard but condemnation, without any vindication. It was not difficult indeed to do this to one who did not defend herself.

I WAS in this convent, and had seen Father *La Combe* no farther than I have mentioned; yet they did not cease to publish, both of him and me, the most scandalous stories; as utterly false as any thing could be, for he was then a hundred and fifty leagues from me.

FOR some time I was ignorant of this. As I knew that all my letters were kept from me, I ceased to wonder at receiving none. I lived in this house with my little daughter in a sweet repose, which was a very great favour of Providence: for my daughter had forgot her *French*, and among the little girls from the mountains had contracted a wild look and disagreeable manners. Her wit, sense and judgment were indeed surprizing, and her disposition exceedingly good. There were only some little fits of peevishness, which they had caused to rise in her, through certain contrarieties out of season, caresses ill applied, and for want of knowing the proper manner of education. But the LORD provided in regard to her, as I shall tell. During this time my mind was preserved calm and resigned to GOD. My silence was great; and for some time I had leisure to taste of and to enjoy the Divinity in my little cell: Afterwards that good Sister almost continually interrupted me; and I answered every thing

thing she desired of me, both out of condescension, and from a principle which I had to obey like a child.

WHEN I was in my apartment, without any other director than our LORD by his Spirit, however favoured therein, as soon as one of my little children came to knock at my door, he required me to admit the interruption. He showed me that it is not the actions in themselves which please him, but the constant ready obedience to every discovery of his will, even in the minutest things, with such a suppleness, as not to stick to any thing, but still to turn with him at every call. My soul was then, I thought, like a leaf, or a feather, which the wind moves what way soever it pleases; and the LORD never suffers a soul so dependent on, and dedicated to him, to be deceived.

MOST part of men appear to me very unjust, who readily resign themselves to another man, and look upon that as prudence. They confide in men who are nothing, and boldly say, "Such a person cannot be deceived:" And if one speak of a soul wholly resigned to GOD, which follows him faithfully, they cry aloud, "That person is deceived with his resignation." Oh my divine Love! Dost thou want either strength, fidelity, love, or wisdom, to conduct those who trust in thee, and who are thy dearest children? I have seen men bold enough to say, "Follow me, and you shall not be misled." How sadly are those men misled themselves by their presumption! And how much sooner should I go to him who would be afraid of misleading me; who

K k

trusting

trusting neither to his learning nor experience, would rely upon GOD only !

OUR LORD shewed me, in a dream, two ways by which souls steer their course, under the figure of two drops of water. The one appeared to me of an unparalleled beauty, brightness and purity ; the other to have also a brightness, yet full of little fibres or streaks ; both good to quench thirst ; the former altogether pleasant, but the latter not so perfectly agreeable. By the former is represented *the way of pure and naked Faith*, which pleases the Spouse much, it is so pure, so clear from all *Self-love*. The way of openings or gifts is not so ; and yet it is that in which many enlivened souls walk, and into which they had drawn Father *La Combe*. But GOD shewed me, that he had given him to me, to draw him into one more pure and perfect. I spoke before the Sisters, he being present, of *the way of Faith*, how much more glorious it was to GOD, and advantageous for the soul, than all those gifts, openings and assurances which ever cause us to live to self. This discouraged them at first, and him also. I saw they were pained, as they have confessed to me since. I said no more of it at that time. But as he is a person of great humility, he bid me unfold what I had wanted to say to him. I told him a part of my dream of the two drops of water ; yet he did not then enter into what I said, the time for it being not yet come : But when he came to *Gex*, to make the retreats, our LORD made known to me, as I was at prayer in the night, that I was *his Mother*, and he *my Son*. I told him the circumstances of a certain time past ; and he recollected
that

that it was the time of so extraordinary a touch with which the LORD favoured him, that he was quite overwhelmed with contrition. This gave him such an interior renovation, that having retired to pray, in a very ardent frame of mind, he was filled with joy, and seized with a powerful emotion, which made him enter into what I had told him *of the way of Faith*. I give these things, as they happen to come to my remembrance, without carrying them on in order.

AFTER *Easter*, in the year 1682, the Bishop came to *Tonon*. I had occasion to speak to him, which when I had done, our LORD so pointed my words that he appeared thoroughly convinced; But the persons, who had influenced him before, returned to the charge. He then pressed me very much to return to *Gex*, and to take the place of Prioress. I gave him the reasons against it which I have mentioned before. I then appealed to him, as a Bishop, desiring him to take care to regard nothing but God in what he should say to me. He was struck into a kind of confusion: And then said to me, “ Since you speak to me “ in such a manner, I cannot advise you to it. “ It is not for us to go contrary to our vocations; “ but do good, I pray you, to this house.” I promised him to do it; and having received my pension, I sent them a hundred pistoles, with a design of doing the same as long as I should be in the diocese. The Bishop said to me farther, “ I love Father *La Combe*. He is a true servant “ of God: And he has told me many things to “ which I was forced to assent; for I felt them “ in myself: But, *added he*, when I say so, they “ tell me I am mistaken, and that before the end “ of six months he will run mad.” He told me,
“ he

“ he approved of the Nuns, which had been under the care and instruction of Father *La Combe*, finding them to come up fully to what he had heard of them.” From thence I took occasion to tell him “ that in every thing he ought to refer himself to his own breast, or to the instructions there immediately received, and not to others.” He agreed to what I said, and acknowledged it to be right : And yet no sooner was he returned than so great was his weakness that he re-entered into his former dispositions. He sent the same Ecclesiastic to tell me that I must engage myself at *Gex* ; and that it was his sentiment. I answered, that I was determined to follow the counsel he had given me, when he had spoke to me *as from God*, since now they made him speak only *as man*.

CHAP. VIII.

MY soul was in a state of entire resignation, and very great content, in the midst of such violent tempests. Those persons came to tell me a hundred extravagant stories against Father *La Combe*. The more they said to me to his disadvantage, the more esteem I felt for him. I answered them, “ Perhaps I may never see him again ; but I shall ever be glad to do him justice. It is not he who hinders me from engaging at *Gex*. It is only because I know it to be none of my vocation.” They asked me, “ Who could know that better than the Bishop?” They farther told me, “ I was under a deception, and my state was good for nothing.” This gave me no uneasiness, having referred to God the care of requiring, and of executing what

what he requires, and in whatever manner he demands it.

A SOUL in this state seeks nothing for itself, but all for GOD. Some may say, "What then does this soul?" It leaves itself to be conducted by GOD's providences and creatures. Outwardly its life seems quite common; inwardly, it is wholly resigned to the divine will. The more every thing appears adverse, and even desperate, the more calm it is, in spite of the annoyance and pain of the senses and of the creatures, which, for some time after the new life, raise some clouds and obstructions, as I have already signified. But when the soul is entirely passed into its original Being, all these things no more cause any separation or partition. It finds no more of that impurity which came from self-seeking, from a human manner of acting, from an unguarded word, from any warm emotion or eagerness, which caused such a mist, as it then could neither prevent nor remedy, having so often experienced its own efforts to be useless, and even hurtful, as they did nothing else but still more and more defile it. There is in such case no other way or means of remedy, but in waiting till *the sun of righteousness* dissipate those fogs, as the whole work of purification comes from GOD only. Afterwards this conduct becomes natural: And then the soul can say with the royal prophet, "Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: Though war should rise against me, in him will I confide." For then, though assaulted on every side by evil spirits, it continues fixed as a rock. Having no will but for what GOD
sees

sees meet to order, be it what it may, high or low, great or small, sweet or bitter, honour, wealth, life or any other object, what can shake its peace? It is true, our nature is so crafty that it worms itself through every thing; and a *selfish sight* is like the basilisks; it destroys.

TRIALS are suited to the state of the soul, whether conducted by lights, gifts, or extasies, &c. or by the entire destruction of self in *the way of naked faith*. Both these states are found in St. PAUL. He tells us, "And lest I should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me." He prayed thrice, and it was said to him, "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness." He proved also another state when he thus expressed himself, "Oh wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" To which he replies, "I thank GOD, it is done through JESUS CHRIST our LORD." It is he who conquers death in us through his own life. Then there is no longer a sting in death, or thorn in the flesh, capable of paining or hurting any more,

At first indeed, and for a pretty long time after, the soul sees that *nature* wants to take some part with it in its trials: And then its fidelity consists in withholding it, without allowing it the least indulgence, till it leaves every thing to go on with GOD in purity as it comes from him. Till the soul be in this state, it always sullies, by its own mixture, the operation of GOD; like

like those rivulets which contract the corruption of the places they pass through; but, flowing in a pure place, they then remain in the purity of their source. Unless God through experience make known this guidance to the soul, it can never comprehend it.

OH if souls had courage enough to resign themselves to the work of purification, without having any weak and foolish pity on themselves, what a noble, rapid and happy progress would they make! But few are willing to lose the earth. If they advance some steps; as soon as the sea is ruffled, they are dejected, they cast anchor, and often desist from the prosecution of the voyage. Such disorders doth selfish interest and *self-love* occasion. It is of consequence not to look too much at one's own state; not to lose courage, not to afford any nourishment to *self-love*, which is so deep-rooted, that its empire is not easily demolished.—Often the idea which a man falsely conceives of the greatness of his advancement in divine experience makes him want it to be seen and known of men, and to wish to see the very same perfection in others. He conceives too low ideas of others, and too high of his own state. Then it becomes a pain to him to converse with people too human; whereas a soul truly mortified and resigned would rather converse with the worst, by the order of Providence, than with the best, of its own choice; wanting only to see or to speak to any as Providence directs, knowing well that all beside, far from helping, only hurt it, or at least prove very unfruitful to it.

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WHAT then renders this soul so perfectly content? It neither knows, nor wants to know, any thing but what GOD calls it to. Herein it enjoys divine content, after a manner vast, immense, independent of exterior events; more satisfied in its humiliation, and in the opposition of all creatures, by the order of Providence, than on the throne of its own choice.

OH thou who alone conductest these souls, and who canst teach ways so hidden and lost, so contrary to *the usual spirit of devotion*, which is full of itself and its own virtues;—bring hither souls innumerable, which may love thee in the utmost purity. Every other love, however vehement and ardent, is not the pure love, but a love mixed with selfishness. These souls are the delight of GOD, *who delights to be with the children of men*, (Prov. 8. 31.) that is with souls child-like and innocent, such as are set free from pride, ascribing to themselves only nothingness and sin. They are one in GOD, to such a degree, that they look at him only, and every thing else in him. Beautiful is that passage of JEREMIAH, “He sitteth alone, and keepeth silence because he hath borne his yoke upon him.” (Iam. iii. 28.)

WHAT makes the perfection of one state, is only the weak and imperfect beginning of that which follows it, as in the mounting up from a lower class to a higher. The child’s state has its beauties and charms in its season, as have all the succeeding stages of the divine life, when rightly disposed and directed. St. PAUL says, *The Law was our School-master to bring us unto CHRIST*. (Gal. iii. 29.) But when we are come
to

to him, that master is then rendered of no use. It is he who brings into *the perfect liberty of the Sons of God*, which liberty flows from the Spirit of God. But what are those souls designed for, which are so dear to him? *To be conformed to the Image of his Son.* (Rom. viii. 29. 30.)

It is here that the apostolic life begins.—But is every one called to that state?—Very few, indeed, as far as I can comprehend; and, of the few that are called to it, fewer still walk in true purity. There is a way of lights, gifts and graces, a holy life in which the creature appears all admirable: As this life is more apparent, so it is more esteemed of such at least as have not the purest light. The souls which walk in the other path are often very little known; for a length of time, as it was with JESUS CHRIST himself, till the last years of his life. Oh if I could express what I conceive of this state! But I can only stammer about it,—I have wandered far from my story, but am not capable of doing otherwise.

C H A P. IX.

BEING, as I have said, with the *Ursulines* at *Tonon*, after having spoken to the Bishop of *Geneva*, and seeing how he changed, just as others turned him, I wrote to him and to Father *La Mothe*; but all my pains were useless. The more I endeavoured to accommodate matters, the more the Ecclesiastic tried to confound them.—I ceased to meddle.

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I HAD a dream that I drew a cord which seemed at first of diamond ; but afterwards it appeared to be of iron. I saw storms coming on every side ; yet I rested in a profound peace, waiting for the strokes which I could not avoid. I beheld the tempest descend impetuously, without my having done the least thing to contribute to it, or seeing any thing for me to do but peaceably to suffer. One day I was told that the Ecclesiastic had won over the good girl whom I dearly loved. So strong a desire I had had for her perfection that it had cost me much. I should not have felt the death of a child so much as her loss : At the same time I was told how to hinder it ; but that human way of acting was repugnant to my inward sense ; and these words arose in my heart, *Except the LORD build the House, &c.*

AND indeed he provided herein himself, hindering her from yielding to this deceitful man, after a manner to be admired, and very thwarting to the designs of him and his associates. As long as I was with her she still seemed wavering and fearful : But oh the infinite goodness of GOD, to preserve without our aid what without his we should inevitably lose !—I was no sooner separated from her, but she became *immoveable*.

As for me, there scarce passed a day but they treated me with new insults ; their assaults came on me at unawares. The new Catholics, by the instigation of the Bishop of Geneva, the Ecclesiastic, and the sisters at Cex, stirred up all the persons of piety against me, I had but little uneasiness on my account. If I could have had it on any, it would have been on that of Father *La Combe*, whom they vilely aspersed, though he was

was absent. They even made use of his absence, to overset all the good he had done in the country; by his missions and pious labours, which was inconceivably great. At first I was too ready to vindicate him, thinking it justice to do it. I did not do it at all for myself; and our LORD shewed me that I must cease doing it for him, in order to leave him to be more thoroughly annihilated; because from thence he would draw a greater glory, than ever he had done from his own reputation.

EVERY day they invented some new slander. No kind of stratagem, or malicious device in their power, did they omit. They came to surprize and ensnare me in my words; but GOD guarded me so well, that therein they only discovered their own malevolence. I had no consolation from the creatures. She who had the care of my daughter behaved roughly to me. Such are the persons who regulate themselves only by their gifts and openings. When they don't see things presently succeed, as they regard them only by their success, and are not willing to have the affront of their pretensions being thought uncertain, and liable to mistake, they seek *without* for supports. As for me who pretended to nothing, I thought all succeeded well, inasmuch as all tended to self-annihilation. On another side, the maid I had brought, and who stayed with me, grew tired out. Wanting to go back again, she stunned me with her complaints, thwarting and chiding me from morning till night, upbraiding me with what I had left, and coming to a place where I was good for nothing. I was obliged to bear all her ill-humours and the clamours of her tongue.

F. La

F. *La Motte* wrote to me that I was a rebel to my Bishop, staying in his diocese only to give him pain. Indeed, I saw there was nothing for me to do here, so long as the Bishop should be against me. I did what I could to gain his good will : but it was impossible on any other terms than the engagement he demanded, and that I knew to be my duty not to do. This, joined to the poor education of my daughter, affected my heart. When any glimmering of hope appeared, it soon vanished ; and I gained strength from a sort of despair.

DURING this time Father *La Combe* was at Rome, where he was received with so much honour, and his doctrine so highly esteemed, that the sacred congregation was pleased to take his *sentiments* on some points of doctrine, which were found to be so just, and so clear, that it followed them. Mean while the sister would take no care of my daughter, and when I took care of her, she was displeased. I was not able, by any means to prevail on her to promise me to try to prevent her contracting bad habits. However I hoped that Father *La Combe*, at his return, would bring every thing into order, and renew my consolation. Yet I left it all to GOD.

ABOUT July, 1682, my sister, who was an *Ursuline*, got permission to come to the waters. She brought a maid with her, which was very seasonable.—My sister assisted in the education of my daughter, but she had frequent jarring with her Tutoress—I laboured but in vain for peace.—By some instances which I met with in this place, I saw clearly that it is not great gifts which sanctify, unless they be accompanied with a profound humility ;

mility ; and that death to every thing is infinitely more beneficial ; for there was one who thought herself at the summit of perfection, but has discovered since, by the trials which have befallen her, that she was yet very far from it. Oh my God, how true it is that we may have of thy gifts, and yet be very imperfect, and full of ourselves !

How very straight is the gate which leads to a life in God ! how little and stript of every thing one must be to pass through it, it being nothing else but death to ourselves ! But when passed through it, what enlargements do we find ! *David* saith, (Psalm xviii. 19.) “ He brought me forth into a large place.” And what is this but that infinite Being, in whom all other beings terminate ? And it was through humiliation and abasement that he was brought hither.

F. *La Combe*, on his arrival, came to see me. The first thing he said was about his own weakness, and that I must return. He added, “ that all seemed dark, and no likelihood that God “ would make use of me in this country.” The Bishop of *Geneva* wrote to Father *La Mothe* to get me to return, and he wrote to me accordingly to do it. The first *Lent* which I passed with the *Ursulines*, I had very great pains in my eyes ; for that same imposthume which I formerly had between the eye and the nose, returned upon me thrice over. The bad air, and the chamber which I was in, too open to it, contributed hereto. My head was frightfully swelled, but great was my inward joy. It was a thing somewhat particular, to see many good creatures, who did not know me, love and pity me : and all the rest enraged against me, and most of them on reports
entirely

entirely false, neither knowing me, nor why they so hated me. To swell the stream of affliction yet more, my daughter fell sick and was likely to die: There were but little hopes of her when her mistress also fell ill. My soul, leaving all to God, continued to rest in a quiet and peaceable habitation. O principal and sole Object of my love! Were there never any other reward of what little services we do, or of the marks of homage we render thee, than this fixed state above the vicissitudes in the world, is it not enough? The senses indeed are sometimes ready to start aside, and to run off like truants; but every trouble flies before the soul which is entirely subjected to God. By speaking of a fixed state, I don't mean one which can never decline or fall, that being only in Heaven. I call it fixed and permanent, compared with the states which have preceded it, which were full of vicissitudes and variations. I do not exclude a state of suffering in the senses, or arising from superficial impurity, which remains to be done away, and which one may compare to gold *refined in its substance*, which yet may contract spots on the outside. That gold has no more need to be purified in the fire, having undergone that operation; but needs only be cleansed without. So it seemed to be with me at that time.

THERE is also a pain in this state, which is inflicted of GOD. All the crosses and troubles from without do no more to it than only graze the skin, when compared to this. The soul which is redeemed both from every resistance of the divine Will, and from every selfish practice even of good, has nothing more to fear, or to suffer, from men or devils, though they discharge all their fury on it.

it. Against such a soul indeed all hell is stirred up, and yet all that is little of a suffering to it. Nor could these have any power, *were it not given them from above.* JESUS CHRIST bore all the avenging justice of GOD : And it needed GOD to bear that weight. So it needs a soul transformed and passed into GOD, to bear the weight of the Father's justice. Such are the souls destined to be victims hereof, and *to fill up what is behind of the Sufferings of CHRIST, for his Body's sake which is the Church.* (Col. 1. 24.) But what is there behind of his sufferings, since he himself said, "It is finished," (John, xviii. 19.) except the extension thereof in his members? JESUS CHRIST, in the garden, suffered exceedingly, both from the withdrawing of GOD his Father, and from the weight of the sins of all mankind : So, in his members, their unity with the will of GOD is so much the greater, as it is less perceived through the weight and force of their sufferings.

C H A P. X.

MY daughter had the small-pox and the purples. They sent for a physician from Geneva, who gave her over. Father *La Combe* then came in to visit and pray by her. He gave her his blessing ; and soon after she wonderfully recovered. The persecutions of the new catholics against me continued and increased : Yet, for all that, I did not fail to do them all the good in my power. My daughter's mistress came often to converse with me, but much imperfection appeared in her discourses, though they were on religious subjects. Father *La Combe* regulated many things in regard to my daughter,
which

which vexed her mistress so much, that her former friendship was turned into coldness. She had *grace*, but suffered *nature* too frequently to prevail. I told her my thought on her faults, as I was inwardly directed to do : But though, at that time, God enlightened her to see the truth of what I said, and she has been more enlightened since ; yet the return of her coldness towards me ensued upon it. The debates between her and my sister grew more tart and violent. My daughter, who was only six years and a half old, by her little dexterities, found a way to please them both, chusing to do her exercises twice over, first with the one, then with the other, which continued not long ; for as her mistress generally neglected her, doing things at one time, and leaving them at another, she was reduced to learn only what my sister and I taught her. Indeed the vivacity of my sister was so excessive, that, without a particular grace, it was hard to suit one's self to it : And yet she appeared to me to surmount herself in many things. Formerly I could scarce bear her manners ; but I have since loved every thing in God, who has given me a very great facility to bear the faults of my *neighbour*, with a readiness to please and oblige every one, and such a compassion for their calamities or distresses as I never had before.

MORE easily did I bear the great faults of imperfect souls, than very little ones in such as God had begun to draw toward perfection. I feel my heart enlarged with tenderness towards the first, and a certain firmness in regard to the others, not to tolerate in them faults which are so much the more dangerous, as they less distrust them on account of their subtilty. Though it seems that my

my miseries ought to impose silence on me, I cannot forbear, without suffering much, to reprove those souls for their defects. The more any soul is favoured with eminent grace, the more nearly is it united to me; the more violent also is the weight and suffering I feel for it, if it slip or turn aside ever so little. I discern its foundation and its failings, as if they were outwardly shewn or set before me. I mean the inward failings of the mind, for others surprize me not. This view diminishes not the esteem I have for *the persons*; but it makes me know what they want, and obliges me often to tell it to them.

I HAVE no difficulty to use condescension with imperfect persons; I should be secretly smitten if I failed therein: But with souls of grace I cannot bear this human manner of acting, nor suffer long and frequent conversations. It is a case which few persons are capable of, and which is scarce known. Some religious persons say that these conversations are of great service. I believe it may be true for some times, but not for all; for there is a period wherein it hurts, especially when it is of our own choice; the human inclination corrupting every thing. The same things which would be profitable, when God, by his Spirit, draws to them, become quite otherwise, when we of ourselves enter into them. This appears to me so clear, that I prefer being a whole day with the worst of persons, in obedience to God, before being one hour with the best, only from choice and a human inclination.

THE order of divine providence makes the whole rule and conduct of a soul entirely devoted

to God. While it faithfully gives itself up there, to, it will do all things right and well, and will have every thing it wants, without its own care ; because God in whom it confides, makes it *every moment* do what he requires, and furnishes the occasions proper for it. God loves what is of his own order, and of his own will, not according to the idea of the merely rational or even enlightened man ; for he hides these persons from the eyes of others, in order to preserve them in that hidden purity for himself.

BUT how comes it that such souls commit any faults ; because they are not faithful, in giving themselves up to *the present moment*. Often too eagerly bent on something, or wanting to be over faithful, they slide into many faults, which they can neither foresee nor avoid.—Does God then leave souls which confide in him ? Surely no. Sooner would he work a miracle to hinder them from falling, if they were resigned enough to him. They may be resigned as to the general will, and yet fail as to *the present moment*. Being out of the order of God, they fall. They renew such falls as long as they continue out of that divine order.—When they return into it, all goes right and well.

MOST assuredly if such souls were faithful enough, not to let any of *the moments of the order of God* slip over, they would not thus fall. This appears to me as clear as the day. As a dislocated bone out of the place in which the economy of divine wisdom had fixed it, gives continual pain till restored to its proper order,—so the many troubles in life, come from the soul not
abiding

abiding in its place, and not being content with *the order of God*, and what is afforded therein *from moment to moment*? If men rightly knew this secret, they would all be fully content and satisfied. But alas! instead of being content with what they have, they are ever wishing for what they have not; while the soul, which enters into the divine light begins to be in paradise. What is it that makes paradise? It is *the order of God*, which renders all the saints infinitely content, though very unequal in glory!—From whence comes it that so many poor indigent persons are so contented, and that princes and potentates, who abound to profusion, are so wretched and unhappy? It is because the man who is not content with what he has, will never be without craving desires; and he who is the prey of an unsatisfied desire, can never be content.

ALL souls have more or less of strong and ardent desires, except those which are in *the divine moment*. Some have good desires, as to suffer martyrdom for God; others thirst for the salvation of their neighbour, and some pant to see God in glory. All this is excellent: But he who rests in *the divine moment*, though exempt from all these desires, is infinitely more content, and glorifies God more. The moment of suffering is the order of God, and the desire of what one has does not accompany the thing itself. It is written concerning JESUS CHRIST, when he drove out of the temple those who profaned it, “The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.” John ii. 17. It was *in that moment* of the order of God, that these words had their effect. How many times had JESUS CHRIST been in the temple without such a conduct? Does not he occasionally

occasionally say of himself, that *his hour was not yet come?*

THE Saints in glory ever desire, and ever possess God—Yet this can hardly be called a desire; it is rather an appetite which the present good produces, and instead of being restless or painful, but augments the delight of enjoyment:—It is an energy or flight of the spirit, that enjoys and advances incessantly in God, discovering still new and transporting beauties in him.—Eternity can never exhaust these infinite treasures of that beauty, which is ever ancient and new.—What they have once known, they know eternally, and yet every moment unfolds and discovers new scenes of wonder, and glory, and ever varying delights!—

THE tendency of the soul to its centre is so strong, that all the impetuosity which we see in inanimate creatures, to return to theirs, are but faint shadows of this bent of the soul to its origin,—for the soul being highly superior, is consequently more powerful in its attraction. But God being infinite, his attraction is unspeakable.

FROM this infinite attraction of God, as well as the bent of the soul to follow the draught of the central force, one may judge of the pain of those souls, which are stopped in this violent bent, more or less, according as the obstacles, which hinder them from becoming lost in God, are more or less powerful: As also of the pain of souls in hell, a pain so much the greater as it is accompanied with the despair of ever being united to their centre. The reason we do not feel in this life the strong weight of our separation from

from, or the force of this powerful attraction to our centre, is because of the body, which, amusing itself with created objects, procures a diversion, and takes away the attention of the soul from this attracting virtue of the centre, till the inquietude of its separation hinders it from finding any peaceful rest on earth. Souls in purifying suffer no longer than till the fault or obstruction is taken away—for then the pain ceases, and the degree of their suffering is just in proportion to the guilt or hindrance, which prevents their re-union. And after a fall, they suffer more or less, according to the quality of the fault.—But I wander immoderately.

End of the Year 1682.

C H A P. XI.

AFTER Father *La Combe* was returned from *Rome*, well approved, and furnished with testimonials of his life and doctrine, he performed his functions of preaching and confessing as usual. To him I confessed; and he told me at first that I must return, as I have mentioned. I gave him an account of what I had done and suffered in his absence, and what care God had taken of all my concerns. I saw his Providence incessantly extended to the very smallest things. After having been several months without any news of my papers, when some pressed me to write, and blamed my neglect, an invisible hand held me back; my peace and confidence were great herein. I received a letter from the Ecclesiastic at home, which informed me that he had orders to come and see me, and bring me my papers.

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papers. I had sent for a pretty considerable bundle of things from *Paris* for my daughter. I heard they were lost on the lake, and could learn no further tidings about them.

BUT I gave myself no trouble, I always thought they would be found. The man who had taken the charge of them made a search after them a whole month, in all the environs, without hearing any news about them. At the end of three months they were brought to me, having been found in the house of a poor man, who had not opened them, nor knew who brought them thither. Once I had sent for all the money which was to serve me a whole year; the person who had been to receive cash for the bill of exchange, having put that money in two bags on horse-backs, forgot that it was there, and gave the horse to a little boy to lead. The money fell from the horse in the middle of the market at *Geneva*. That instant I arrived, coming on the other side, and having alighted from my litter, the first thing I found was my money, in walking over it; what was surprizing, a great throng was in this place, and not one had perceived it. Many such things have attended me, which, to avoid prolixity, I pass by. These may suffice, to shew the continual protection of God.

THE Bishop of *Geneva* continued to persecute me. When he wrote to me, it was with politeness and thanks for my charities at *Gen*: While at the same time he said to others, "I gave nothing to that house." He wrote against me to the *Ursulines* with whom I lived, charging them to hinder me from having any conferences with Father
ther

ther *La Combe*, for fear of bad consequences. The superior of the house, a man of merit, and the prioress, as well as the community, were so irritated at this, that they could not forbear testifying it to himself. He then excused himself with a pretended respect, saying, *I did not mean it that way*. They wrote to him, “that I did not see the Father but at the confessional, and not in conference; that they were so much edified by me, as to think themselves happy in having me, and to esteem it a great favour from God.” What they said out of pure charity was not pleasing to the Bishop, who, seeing they loved me in this house, said, *that I won over every body to myself, and that he wished I were out of the diocese*. Though I knew all this, and these good sisters were troubled at it, I could have no trouble by reason of the calm establishment which I was in, the will of God rendering every thing equal to me; the creatures, however unreasonable or passionate they appear, not being regarded in themselves but in God; for an habitual faith causes every thing to be seen in God without distinction. Thus when I see poor souls so ruffled for discourses in the air, so uneasy for explanations, I pity them for their want of light. They have reasons, I know, which *self-love* causes to appear very just.

To relieve myself a little from the fatigue of continual conversation, as my body grew weak, I desired Father *La Combe* to allow me a retreat, and to give out that he had ordered me to make one. He told the people so; but they could hardly leave me in repose. It was then that I let myself be consumed by love all the day long. Then also I perceived the quality of a spiritual mother; for God gave me what I cannot express
for

for the perfection of souls. This I could not hide from Father *La Combe*. It seemed to me as if I entered into the inmost recesses of his heart. Our Lord shewed me he was his servant, chosen amongst a thousand, singularly to honour him; but that he would lead him through total death, and the entire destruction of *the old man*; that he would have me contribute thereto, and be instrumental to cause him to walk in the way in which he had led me first; in order that I might be in a condition to direct others therein, and to tell them the tracks through which I have passed; that God would have us to be conformed, and to become both one in him; that though my soul was more advanced now, yet he should one day pass beyond it, with a bold and rapid flight. God knows how I rejoiced herein, and with what joy I would see my *children* surpass their *mother* in glory.

IN this retreat I felt a strong propensity to write, but resisted it till I fell sick. I had nothing to write about, not one idea to begin with. It was a divine impulse, with such a fullness of grace as was hard to contain, or bear, like mothers full of milk, which suffer much. I opened this disposition of mine, to Father *La Combe*. He answered me "that he had a strong impulse to command me to write but had not dared to do it yet, on account of my weakness." I told him, "that weakness was the effect of my resistance, and I believed it would, through my writing go off again," he asked me, "But what is it you will write?" I replied, "I know nothing of it, nor desire to know, leaving it entirely to God to direct me." He ordered me to do so. At my taking the pen I knew not the first word I should write; but when I began, suitable matter flowed copiously,

copiously, nay impetuously; and as I was writing I was relieved and grew better. I wrote an entire treatise on the interior path of Faith, under the comparison of torrents, or of streams and rivers *; and though it is pretty long, the comparison in it holds out to the end.

As the way, wherein God now conducted Father *La Combe*, was very different from that in which he had formerly walked; which had been all light, knowledge, ardour, assurance, sentiments; but now the poor, low, despised path of faith, and of nakedness; he found it very hard to submit thereto, which caused me no little suffering. Who could express what it has cost my heart before he was formed according to the will of God? The more this soul is precious in the eyes of God, the more dearly have I been obliged to pay for it. Mean time the possession which God had of my soul became every day stronger, insomuch that I passed whole days without being able to pronounce one word; for God was pleased to make me pass wholly into him by an entire internal transformation †. He became more and more the absolute master of my heart, to such a degree as not to leave me a movement of my own, in order that I might be continually supple to every intimation of his will. This state did not hinder me from condescending to my sister, and the others in the house.

Nevertheless

* This Treatise was written by her in 1683, entitled *The Torrents*. It has been twice printed in *Holland*, among her spiritual works, in the first Volume in 1704, and more correctly in the second Volume in 1712.

† John, xvii. 21. 23. 1 Cor. vi. 17.

Nevertheless the useless things with which they were taken up could not suit my state. That was what induced me to ask leave to make a retreat, to let myself be possessed of him who holds me so closely united to himself after an ineffable manner. At this time he purified me from a relick of nature very subtil and delicate, so that my soul was brought into very great purity. All partitions were utterly consumed. Then it was given me to write in a manner purely divine. All that I had wrote, before the time of my probation, was condemned to the fire. Our Lord united me more closely in his spirit with Father *La Combe*. He required me to tell him my thoughts, to the very least of them, or to write them to him as he was often absent. It was a thing which I had never done before, when I might have done it more commodiously. I said with the spouse, (Cant. v. 3.) "I have put off
" my coat, how shall I put it on? I have wash-
" ed my feet, how shall I defile them?" Must my spirit, which is so naked and empty, again be furnished and filled? And after having been subject to GOD only, must I become so to the creature? I could have wished to avoid it, had I been mistress of myself; but I was taken up with the thought till I had obeyed. Far from having its former purity, the heart became sullied by such thoughts, even though they were of good things: For to trouble the water with a stick of wood, or a staff of gold, it still muddies it alike. I found that the stronger the union grew between us, the more we were united to GOD, and drawn off from human sentiments. I was the more constrained to forgive him nothing which was amiss, to desire the thorough destruction thereof, that GOD only might reign; and
was

was obliged to tell him faithfully whatever the LORD made known to me that he required of him:—And this was a hard place to pass. I was constrained to tell him the essential defects of the sister who took care of my daughter: As he was prepossessed in her favour, from her gifts and graces which she had told him of, he rejected with displeasure what I said about her: But the LORD allowed me not to rest till I told him all I thought of her, in regard to her faults. On every occasion I was forced to suffer for his infidelity. Long has been the martyrdom I have suffered on this account, and beyond whatever can be expressed concerning it.

C H A P. XII.

OUR blessed LORD had fully determined that I should enter into, and experience all his states, beginning with the first, and going on even to the last. Reducing me even to a perfect child-like simplicity, he gave me such a wonderful obedience to my director Father *La Combe*, that into whatever extremity of bodily illness I was plunged, I was immediately cured at his command. I seemed to be a representative of JESUS CHRIST in his Childhood, obedient to his Father's will. Also a sign and testimony to this good Father, who having been hitherto conducted by *testimonies* *, could not get out of that way. In all that was said to him, and all that God caused him to experience, he was ever seeking for
some

* *That is to say, sensible Marks, perceptible Proofs, and evident Reasons. Editor's Note,*

some *testimonies*, reasons or demonstrations; it was the point wherein he had the most pain to do to himself, and by which he has caused me to suffer so much. Our Lord to make him enter the more readily into what he required both of him and of me, gave him the greatest of all testimonies, which was this wonderful obedience; in order to make him see that it did not depend upon me, but that God gave it me for him; when he grew strong enough to bear the loss of every testimony, and God would have him learn to walk without such helps, this obedience was taken from me in such sort, that without an immediate attention thereto, I could no longer obey him. This was ordered to make him enter the more into death to himself, and to deprive him of the support of this testimony; for now all my efforts to revive it were useless. I was obliged to follow the internal dictates of my Sovereign. He gave me this repugnance to obey my external director; but it continued no longer than was necessary to make him lose the support he had drawn from thence, and perhaps I myself also.

I HAD at that time so ardent a desire for his perfection, and to see him thoroughly die to himself. that I could have wished him all the crosses and afflictions, imaginable (far from pitying him in them) that might conduce to this great and blessed end. Whenever he was unfaithful, or looked at things in any other light than the true one. *viz.* to tend to this mystic death, I felt myself on the rack, which, as I had till then been so indifferent, very much surprized me. To the LORD I made my complaint, who graciously encouraged me, both on this subject and on that entire

entire dependence on himself which he gave me, which was such that I was like a new born infant.

My sister had brought me a maid *, whom God was willing to give me, to fashion her according to his will, not without some crucifixion to myself, (for I believe it never is to fall out, that our LORD will give me any persons without giving them wherewith to make me suffer for them) whether it be for the purpose of drawing them into a spiritual life, or never to leave me without the cross. She was one on whom the LORD had conferred very singular graces. She was in high reputation in the country, where she passed for a saint. Our LORD brought her to me, to let her see the difference between the sanctity conceived and comprized in those gifts, with which she was endowed, and that which is obtained by our entire destruction, even by the loss of those very gifts, and of all that raised us in the esteem of men. Our LORD had given her the same dependence on me, as I had in regard to Father *La Combe*, nevertheless with some difference.

THIS girl fell grievously sick. I was willing to give her all the assistance in my power, but I found I had nothing to do but to command her bodily sickness, or the disposition of her mind ; * and all that I said was done. It was then that I learned what it was to command by the WORD, and to obey by the Word. It was JESUS CHRIST in me equally commanding and obeying.

SHE,

* One of those young women who was a prisoner in the *Bastille* at *Paris*, twelve years, when *Lady GUION* was there, *Editor's Note.*

SHE, however, continued sick for some time. One day, after dinner, I was moved to say to her, "Rise and be no longer sick." She rose and was cured. The Nuns were very much astonished; and as they knew nothing of what had passed, but saw her walking, who in the morning had appeared to be in the last extremity, they attributed her disorder to vapours.

[Here she relates some other extraordinary matters, for which we refer the reader to the original French.]

THUS are miracles operated by the annihilated soul, in such sort that as this soul is now become *nothing*, from hence nothing ought to be attributed to it. It does not say, when it feels an impulse to heal, "be thou healed in the name of JESUS CHRIST:" For that is a power of doing miracles in the Name of CHRIST: But here it is CHRIST himself who does the miracle, and who says by that person "Be healed,"—and it is done: Or "Let the devils be gone," and they are gone. When the person says that, it is the divine Word which speaks, and effects what it speaks; the Word which spoke in the beginning, and all things were made. These don't make use of any form of prayers before it. They say what is given them to say. JESUS prayed publicly at the resurrection of *Lazarus*: "But this," *he said*, "I do because of the people who stand by, that they may believe that thou hast sent me." Other servants of GOD, favoured with the gift of miracles, pray, and obtain thereby what they desire: But here it is the WORD who uses his own authority, and who acts by the person in whom he lives and reigns.

Two

Two things hereupon are to be observed. One is, that the souls of which I speak don't generally do their miracles by giving any thing, or by simply touching; but it is by the Word, although they sometimes accompany it with a touch. It is the All-powerful Word. The other is, that these miracles require the consent, or at least that there be no opposition, of the party on whom they are to be wrought. Our blessed LORD asked those good people whom he healed, "Are ye willing to be healed?" Could there be any doubt of it when the men came to him for that very purpose? Such is the great secret of the operation of the Word, and of the liberty of man. 'Tis not thus on the dead, or on inanimate creatures. He then speaks, and it is done: But in the other case it requires the consent of the soul.

I HAVE at sundry times experienced, and felt in myself, how much GOD respects the freedom of man, and even demands his free concurrence; for when I said, "Be healed," or, "Be free from your troubles;" if such persons acquiesced therein, the Word was efficacious, and they were healed. If they doubted, or resisted, though under fair pretexts, as saying, "I shall be healed when it pleases GOD, I will not be healed till he wills it;" or, in the way of despair, "I cannot be healed; I will not quit my condition," then the word had no effect. I felt in myself, that the divine Virtue retired in me. I experienced what our LORD said, when the woman afflicted with the issue of blood touched him, and he instantly asked, "Who touched me?" The apostles said, "Master, the multitude throng thee, and press thee; and sayest thou,

"thou, Who touched me?" But he replied, "It is because virtue hath gone out of me." (Luke viii. 45, 46.) JESUS CHRIST had caused that healing virtue to flow, through me, by means of his Word: But when that virtue met not with a correspondence in the subject, I felt it suspended in its source, which gave me some pain. I should be, as it were, displeased with those persons: But when there was no resistance, but a full acquiescence, this divine virtue had its full effect. One cannot conceive the delicacy of this healing virtue. Although it has so much power over things inanimate, yet the least thing in man either restrains it, or stops it entirely*.

THERE

* The language of infidelity boldly pronounces, *miracles are ceased*; as if either the omnipotence of GOD, or his benevolence to mankind were ceased. So formerly, when iniquity bore sway, the people said, "The Lord hath forsaken the earth; the Lord seeth not." Ezek. ix. 9.

Among the first Christians, we find, there were diversities of gifts from the same spirit, *viz.* gifts of healing, working miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, &c. 1 Cor. xii. 4, 9, 10. I have no doubt at all but if men at this day were sufficiently purified, they would in like manner be eminently dignified. This I must ever believe on behalf of that infinite wisdom and goodness, which *would have all men to be saved from evil, and to come unto the knowledge of the Truth.* 1 Tim. ii. 4. The things which this divine Truth unfolds are such as *the natural man receiveth not; for they are foolishness unto him: Neither c. n he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* 1 Cor. ii. 4.

M. GUION had been brought through the Deeps, and had passed through the Furnace of Purification. Who then can be competent Judges of *her* Words and Works,

THERE was a good nun much afflicted, and under a violent temptation. She went to declare her case to a sister whom she thought very spiritual, and in a condition capable of assisting her. But far from finding succour here, she was very much discouraged and cast down. The other despised and repulsed her, treating her with contempt and rigour, said, "Don't come near me *, " since you are that way." This poor girl in a frightful distress came to me, thinking herself undone, on account of what the sister had said to her. I consoled her and our LORD relieved her immediately ; but I could not then forbear telling her, " that assuredly the other would be " punished, and would fall into a state worse " than hers." The Sister who had used her in such a manner came also to me, highly pleased with herself in what she had done, saying, " she abhorred such tempted creatures ; that as " for herself, she was proof against such sorts " of temptations, and that she never had a bad " thought." I said to her, " My Sister, from " the friendship I have for you I wish you the " pain of her who spoke to you, and even one " still more violent." She answered me haughtily, " If you were to ask it from GOD for me, " and I ask of him the contrary, I believe I shall " be heard at least as soon as you." I answered her with great firmness, " If it be only my own " interests which I ask, I shall not be heard ; " but

Works, but such as have followed CHRIST to the same Length and Depth? We have no other rule to judge of Pretenders and their Pretensions by, but that which CHRIST has given, *viz. Ye shall know them by their fruits.* Mat. viii. 16.

* How rash and unchristian is it to deride temptations.

“but if it be those of God only, and yours too,
“I shall be heard sooner than you are aware.”

That very night she fell into so violent a temptation that one equal to it has seldom been seen; she continued in it a fortnight. It was then she had ample occasion, to acknowledge her own weakness, and what she should be without grace. She conceived at first a violent hatred for me, saying, *that I was the cause of her pain*. But as it served her, as the clay did to enlighten him who had been born blind, she saw very well what had brought on her so terrible a state.

I FELL sick, even to extremity. This sickness proved a means to cover the great mysteries which it pleased God to operate in me. Scarce ever was a disorder more extraordinary, or of longer continuance in its excess. I was reduced to a state of mere infancy, a state which appeared only to those who were capable of it. As for others, to them mine appeared only a natural or common case. I was put into a dependance on the Child JESUS, who was willing to communicate to me his own infant state, that I should bear him as such. The more I advanced the more I was freed from this dependance, as children gradually rise above such dependance as they grow up. My fever ran so high as to a delirium. I had also an imposthume at the corner of my eye very painful. At this time it broke entirely. They dressed it a long time, and probed it down to the bottom of my cheek. I had so burning a fever, and was so very weak, that it was obliged to be left to close of itself without a cure; for my emaciated body was not able to bear these operations, without being on the very point of expiring. I suffered with great patience,
like

like a child which scarce knows what one does to it. I then experienced the strength of God joined to the weakness of a child. My natural disposition was so remote from such a deportment, that no less than a divine Power was sufficient to bring me to it. Nevertheless, I gave myself up to be led thus; for my interior state was so actuated of God, that I could not resist him. His spirit was become the sole master in me; and made me do, or submit to, whatever he pleased; so that during this sickness, my look was infantine, as those about me observed. And yet our LORD gave me, with the weaknesses of a child, such a power over souls, that with a word I put them in pain, or in peace, as was necessary for their good. I saw that God made himself be obeyed, in and through me, like an absolute Sovereign. I neither resisted him nor took part in any thing. I inwardly felt a candour of soul, inexpressible, and quite exempt from all guile. With this I was obliged to continue to tell my thoughts, or write them, to Father *La Combe*, and to help him according to the light which was given me. I was often so weak that I could not lift up my head to take nourishment; and when God required me to write to him, either to help and encourage him, or to lay before him what was made known to me, I had strength given me to do it. When my letters were finished, I found myself in the same weakness. Our LORD had given us both to understand that he would unite us by faith and by the cross. Ours then has been a union of the cross in every respect, as well by what I have made him suffer, as by what I have suffered for him. Thus it was reciprocal, and much stronger than I am able to

to express. The sufferings which I have had on his account were such as reduced me sometimes to extremity, and continued for several years; For though I have been much more of my time far from him, than near him, that did not relieve my suffering, which lasted till he was perfectly emptied of self, and to the very point of submission which God required of him. This operation made him suffer pains so much the more intense, as the designs of God upon him were the greater. He has occasioned me cruel pains when I was near a hundred leagues from him. I felt his disposition. If he was faithful in letting SELF be destroyed, I was in a state of peace and enlargement; if he was unfaithful, in reflection or hesitation, I suffered till that was passed over. He had no need to write me an account of his state, for I knew it; but when he did write, it proved to be such as I had felt it. My heart had in it as it were a counterpart, or an echo, which told it all the dispositions which he was in. In short, to bear a soul, however distant the person may be, in all its different dispositions, and to suffer for all its resistances, is a thing very strange and mysterious.

I WAS much surprized to comprehend by experience, that what God required of me in thus obliging me to tell my thoughts, was to perfect me in simplicity, to make me readily yield to whatever he manifested to be his will, and to make Father *La Combe* enter into the same state: For whatever cross it was to me thus to tell him all my thoughts, which often so much disgusted him, as to make him desist from serving me, as he told me; yet I never forbore on this account

account to tell him them : And he, through submission to divine grace, at length got over all these repugnances.

C H A P. XIII.

MY sister was in no wise capable of comprehending my state. She often took offence at it ; yet was displeased when I concealed it from her ever so little, although it was so strange to her ; the depth and nature of it being such, as many persons more spiritual than she, could not have been able to comprehend ; so that in this sickness I suffered much on all sides. The exercises of pain, though great, were the least. Those on the part of the creature were much greater. My highest consolations were in receiving the sacrament, and sometimes seeing Father *La Combe*. I had strange interruptions and crosses from my sister, as also from that Nun, and from the maid who wanted to return home. I was obliged (whatever extremity I was in) to hear their differences, which they came to tell me one after another ; and they were each of them angry with me, because I would not enter into their party. They scarce allowed me any sleep ; for as the fever redoubled in the night, I could only get one hour's rest. I wished to sleep a little in the day, but they would not let me, saying, *it was only to avoid speaking to them* ; so that I needed very great patience to bear with them. It continued thus, for more than six months. I think that was partly the cause of my delirium which held two days. I still had a noise in my head with a very severe head-ach. Yet I complained of nothing, but suffered cheerfully

fully as a child. Father *La Combe* ordered them to allow me a little repose, which they did for some days only, and soon began again.

I CANNOT express the mercies which God shewed me in the time of this indisposition, and the profound views of the future which he gave me. I saw the Devil in great wrath going to excite a violent persecution against prayer, and against the persons drawn into that holy exercise. I wrote an account of all this to Father *La Combe*; and, if he has not burned the letters, they will still serve as proofs of the truth hereof. The Devil durst not attack myself; he feared me too much. I was to him like a thunderbolt. I then comprehended what a power a soul has, which is entirely annihilated. Our LORD then let me see all that has come to pass since that time, as my letters clearly manifest.

As I was thinking in myself what so great a dependance was, and so pure and intimate an union, I saw twice in a dream JESUS CHRIST, an infant of admirable beauty; and it seemed to me that he very closely united us, saying, "It is I who unite thee to myself, and am willing that we be both one." Another time he bade me see Father *La Combe*, who then kept himself at some distance from me through infidelity; and with great goodness he brought him back again, willing to help me in the state of childhood, as I helped him in the state of death. He had a very great charity for me. Treating me as a real child, he often said to me, "When I am with you, I seem to myself as if I was with a child." I was frequently reduced to extremity, and seemed on the point of death. I had, as it were, its
agonies,

agonies. For several hours I only breathed a long time asunder. Then all on a sudden I recovered. Death flattered me ; for I had a great fondness for it ; but it only appeared flying off. The father forbid me to rejoice at the prospect of death. I immediately discovered that it was an imperfection, and did it no more ; remaining afterwards in the utmost indifference about it. There passed so many extraordinary things in this sickness, that it would be impossible for me to relate them. GOD incessantly wrought miracles to relieve me, and give me new strength when I was at extremity. In my pains they treated me wrong. The remedies they gave me augmented them ; but I could not make myself uneasy about it. The sisters had much compassion for me ; and all were concerned but myself.

SEVERAL times I saw in dreams Father *La Mothe* raising persecutions against me. Our LORD let me know that this would be the case, and that Father *La Combe* would forsake me in the time of persecution. This I wrote to him, and it disquieted him greatly ; because he thought his heart was united to the will of GOD, and too desirous of serving me, to admit such desertion : And yet it has since been found quite true ; though not with his will, but from necessity, having been himself persecuted the first. He was now to preach during Lent, and was so much followed, that people came five leagues, to pass several days there for the benefit of his ministry. I heard he was so sick that he was thought like to die, and prayed to the LORD to restore his health, and enable him to preach to the people, who were longing to hear him. My prayer was heard, and he soon recovered, and resumed his pious labours.

DURING

DURING my extraordinary sickness, the Lord gradually taught me that there was another manner of conversing among souls wholly his, than by speech. Thou madest me conceive, oh divine word, that as thou art ever speaking and operating in a soul, though therein thou appearest in profound silence; so there was also a way of communication in thy creatures, in an ineffable silence: I learned then a language which before had been unknown to me. I gradually perceived, when Father *La Combe* entered, that I could speak no more; and that there was formed in my soul the same kind of silence towards him, as was formed in it in regard to GOD. I comprehended that GOD was willing to shew me that men might in this life learn the language of angels. I was gradually reduced to speak to him only in silence. It was then that we understood each other in GOD, after a manner unutterable and all divine. Our hearts spoke to each other, communicating a grace which no words can express. It was like a new country, both for him and for me, but so divine, that I cannot describe it. At first this was done in a manner so perceptible, *that is to say*, GOD penetrated us with himself in a manner so pure and so sweet, that we passed hours in this profound silence, always communicative, without being able to utter one word. It was in this that we learned, by our own experience, the operations of the heavenly word to reduce souls into unity with itself, and what purity one may arrive at in this life. It was given me to communicate ~~this~~ way to other good souls, but with this difference, that I did nothing but communicate to them the grace with which they were filled, while near me, in this sacred silence, which infused into them an extraordinary strength and grace; but I received nothing

nothing from them : Whereas with Father *La Combe* there was a flow and return of communication of grace, which he received from me, and I from him, in the greatest purity.

IT was in this that I comprehended the ineffable commerce of the most holy Trinity to all the blessed ; and how GOD, who communicates himself to them, forms in them a flux and reflux of his own divine communications ; that the saints of the like degree or hierarchy return to each other these pure and blissful emanations, and further shed them on the inferior hierarchies, and that all are reduced into their first principle, from whence they flow. I saw that we were created to partake in this life the unspeakable happiness of the commerce of the celestial regions, and that it requires us to be very pure to receive GOD thus uninterruptedly, and to leave him to flow back into himself in that same purity. We must indeed be very pure to receive and to communicate the divine Word, and afterwards to diffuse it by a flux and reflux of communication upon the other souls which GOD gives us. This is what fixes us in the divine unity, in which we are one in him from whom all is derived.

I SAW then this hierarchic order, and these reciprocal communications, among the saints and angels of the same rank ; and how this efflux spreads over those of inferior orders, and that with such a plenitude, that they are all filled according to their degree. It is to render the soul capable of these communications, that it needs to be so thoroughly and radically purified ; without which it would ever remain selfish, it would always save something alive : and from thence re-
tard

tard and wholly exclude them. Beside, its capacity needs to be extended, which being extremely contracted and bounded by sin, is not in a state, but by the force of fire, and the strokes of the hammer, to be capable of the eternal designs of God in its creation.

It was shewn to me how this hierarchic order was even in this life, and that there are souls who communicate to an infinite number of other souls, without knowing it, to whom the grace of their perfection reaches; that this hierarchy will be preserved through all eternity, and that those who naturally communicate to each other will be

in the like degree. It was then that I learned the secret of spiritual fruitfulness and maternity; how the holy spirit renders souls fruitful in himself, and that there would be given to me in this way a numberless offspring as well known as unknown. All those who are my true children are drawn in their minds at once to continue in silence when with me; and I have the like tendency to impart to them in silence what God gives me for them. In this silence I discover their wants and failings, and communicate to them in an abundant plenitude according to their necessities. When once they have tasted of this manner of communication, any other becomes burthensome to them. As for me, when I make use of speech or the pen with souls, I do it only on account of their weakness, and because either they are not pure enough for the interior communication: or because it is yet needful to use condescension, or for the regulation of outward affairs.

OUR LORD gave me to experience the same communion with the saints in heaven, as with those

those on earth : This is the way to be truly united to the saints in God. I felt these communications very inward and very powerful, especially to those with whom one has most of the relation of grace, and to whom one is to be most united in heaven. At first this was more sensible, because our LORD was graciously pleased to instruct me by my experience. It is the way which he has always used toward me. He has enlightened me, not by illustrations, and conclusions resulting from them ; but in making me experience the things themselves, he gave me the illumination thereon, and thus a clear sight and sense of what I had experienced. I comprehended also the maternity of the Holy Virgin, and after that manner we partake of it ; and how the word of JESUS CHRIST is found very signally realized, when he says, (Matt. xii. 50.) “ Whosoever shall do the will “ of my Father which is in heaven, the same “ is my brother, and sister, and mother.” They are truly made mothers, producing him in other souls.

It was in this ineffable silence, that I comprehended the manner in which JESUS CHRIST communicated himself to his most familiar friends ; and the communication of St. JOHN, when leaning on his LORD’s bosom at the supper of the passover. It was not the first time that he had seated himself that way : and it was because he was most proper to receive these communications, being the disciple of love. It was in that great banquet that JESUS CHRIST, as the WORD, flowed into JOHN, and discovered to him his profound mysteries, even how the eternal word operates. For the speech of this word in silence
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is the most noble and sublime of all operations. It was by this that he learned the difference between *being born of the flesh, or of the will of man, and being born of God.* (John i. 13.) The operations of the flesh are those of carnal men; those of the will of man are such as are virtuous, being done from the good disposition of the man: But those which I am speaking of are of the will of God, wherein man has no share, except the submission or consent which he gives thereto; which was the case of MARY, who said, "Behold the handmaid of the LORD, be it unto me according to thy word." She gave her consent, not only for herself, for the incarnation of the word in her, but for all who are regenerated in JESUS CHRIST, that the word should be communicated to them; that, as *Eve's* consent to the Tempter had caused death to enter into all her children, so MARY's consent to God might communicate the life of the word to all that are born of God.

It is for this that JESUS CHRIST is *the way, the truth, and the life*; that he comes to *enlighten every man that cometh into the world*: He came to his own; and to as many as received him he gave power to become sons of God: And to such only is he known in his most intimate communications.

OH what admirable communications were those which passed betwixt MARY and St. JOHN, at the foot of the Cross! A filiation, or sonship all divine; which the LORD is willing to extend down to me, all unworthy as I am thereof, and to

to communicate a mother's fruitfulness, affection and tenderness, even to this poor nothing! I mean the fruitfulness of hearts and spirits. Our LORD was willing, in order to instruct me to the bottom of this mystery, in favour of others, that the girl (she whom I have spoke of) should have need of this succour. I proved her every way; and when I was not willing that she should stay with me in silence, I saw her inward condition affected by it, and even her bodily strength fail, till she was just ready to faint away. When I had made a sufficient number of trials hereof, to comprehend these manners of communications, her extreme necessities passed away. I began to discover, especially with Father *La Combe*, that the interior communication was carried on, even when he was afar off, as well as when he was near. Sometimes our LORD made me stop short, when in the midst of my occupations; and I was favoured with such a flow of grace as that which I felt when with him; which I have also experienced with many others, though not in a like degree; but more or less feeling their infidelities, and knowing their faults by inconceivable impressions, without ever having been mistaken therein.

C H A P. XIV.

IN this long malady the love of God, and of him alone, made up my whole occupation, I seemed so entirely lost in him, as to have no sight of myself at all. It seemed as if my heart never came out of that divine ocean, having been drawn into it through deep humiliations. Oh loss which is the consummation of happiness,

ness, though operated through crosses and through deaths!

JESUS, as an infant, was then all living in me; and I lived no more. I was then taught, oh my Love, that thy state of infancy should not be the only one which I must bear. These words were imprinted in me, as a real state into which I must enter, (Matt. viii. 20.) "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the son of man hath not where to lay his head." This I have since experienced in all its extent, having no sure abode, no refuge among my friends, who were ashamed of me, and openly renounced me, when universally decried; nor among my relations, most of whom declared themselves my adversaries, and were my greatest persecutors; while others looked on me with contempt and indignation. My state began to be like that of Job. I might say with DAVID, (Psal. xix. 7, 8.—xxii. 6.—xxxii. 11.) "For thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face; I am become a stranger to my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children: A reproach to men, and despised of the people."

ONE night when I was awake, CHRIST shewed me to myself, under the figure of the woman in the Revelations, (Rev. 12.) for as the brazen serpent represented CHRIST, tho' not really himself, so this figure shadowed out my state. The moon was under her feet, a crown of thorns upon her head, and surrounded with the sun, being with-child, cried in the pangs of childbirth. He showed hereby that my soul was above the vicissitudes and inconstancy of events; that I was covered and penetrated with the sun of

of righteousness ; that the twelve stars were the fruits of this state, and the gifts of GOD, as a crown on my head ; that I was big with a fruit, which was the spirit which GOD would have me communicate to all my children ; that the devil was the frightful dragon who would strive to devour that fruit, and to make horrible ravages over all the earth round about me ; but that GOD would preserve this fruit, that it should not be lost ; (So I trust, in spite of the storm, that all I have had to say or write will be preserved,) that the devil in his rage, at not succeeding in his design against the fruit, would fall the more fiercely on myself, and would raise a flood against me to swallow me up ; that this flood would be calumny, which would rush to carry me down with rapidity ; but that the earth would open itself to receive this flood ; that is to say, that this calumny would gradually fall to the ground, and there die away.

HE showed me all the world in a rage against me, without any one daring to appear for me ; and assured me in the ineffable silence of his eternal Word, that he would give me vast numbers of children, which I should bring forth by the cross. I left it to him to do with me whatever he pleased, esteeming my whole and sole interest to be placed, entirely in his divine Will. He gave me to see how the devil was going to stir up an outrageous persecution against prayer, that it should prove the source of the same prayer, or rather the means which GOD would make use of to establish it. He gave me to see farther how he would guide me into the wilderness, where he would cause me to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time. The wings, which

which were to bear me thither, were the resignation of my whole self to his holy will, and the love of the same will. I think I am at present in that wilderness, separated from the whole world in my imprisonment; and I see already accomplished in part what was then shown me.

Can I ever express the mercies which my God has bestowed on me? No; they must ever remain in himself, being of a nature not to be described, by reason of their purity, and immensity.

In my sickness I was often in all appearance at the point of death. I fell into convulsions from violent pains in my bowels, which lasted a long time with violence. Father *La Combe* administered the sacrament to me, the Prioress of the *Ursulines* having desired him to do it as their priest was then not at home. I was well satisfied to die, as was he also in the expectation of my departure. For being united in God after a manner so pure, and so spiritual, death could not separate us, but on the contrary would have more closely united us. Father *La Combe*, who was on his knees at my bed-side, remarking the change of my countenance, and how my eyes faded, seemed ready to give me up for dying; when God inspired him to lift up his hands, and with a strong voice, which was heard of those who were in my chamber, at that time almost full, to command Death to relinquish. Instantly it seemed to be stopped: And thus God was pleased wonderfully to raise me up again; yet for a long time I continued extremely weak, during all which our LORD still gave me new testimonies of his love. How many times was he pleased to make use of his servant to restore me to life, when I was almost on the very point of expiring!

expiring! As they saw that my sicknesses and pains did not end, they judged that the air of the lake on which the convent was situated, was very prejudicial to my constitution. They concluded that it would be necessary for me to remove.

DURING my sad indisposition, our LORD put it into the heart of Father *La Combe* to establish an hospital in this place for the poor people seized with maladies, and to institute also a committee or congregation of ladies of the charity, to furnish such as could not leave their families, to go to the hospital, with the means of subsistence during their illness, after the manner of *France*, there not having been yet any institution of this kind in that country. Willingly did I enter into it; and without any other fund than Providence, and some useless chambers which the gentlemen of the town gave us, we began it. We dedicated it to the holy Child JESUS, and he was pleased to give the first beds to it from the earnest-pence of my pension, which belong to him. He gave such a blessing thereto, that several other persons joined us in this charity. In a short time there were near twelve beds in it, and three persons of great piety gave themselves to this hospital to serve it, who, without any salary, consecrated themselves to the service of the poor patients. I supplied them with ointments and medicines, which were freely given to such of the poor people of the town as had need of them. These good ladies were so hearty in the cause, that, through their charity, and the care of the young women, this hospital was very well maintained and served. These ladies joined together also in providing for the sick, who could not go to

the hospital : And I gave them some little regulations such as I had observed when in *France*, which they continued to keep up with tenderness and love.

ALL these little things, which cost but little, and which owed all their success to the blessing which GOD gave them, drew upon us new persecutions. The Bishop of *Geneva* was offended with me more than ever, especially in seeing that these small matters rendered me beloved. He said, "I won over every body." He openly declared, "that he could not bear me in his diocese," though I had done therein nothing but good, or rather GOD by me. He extended the persecution to those good *religious women* who had been my assistants. The Prioress in particular had her own share to bear, though it did not last long : For as I was obliged, on account of the air, to remove, after having been there about two years and a half, they were then more in peace and quietness. On another side my sister was very weary of this house : And as the season for the waters approached, they took occasion from thence to send her away, with the maid which I brought with me, who had molested me exceedingly in my late illness. I only kept her whom Providence had sent me by means of my sister : And I have ever thought that GOD had ordered my sister's journey hither, only to bring her to me, as one chosen of him and proper for the state which it was his pleasure to cause me to bear.

WHILE I was yet, indisposed, with the *Ursulines*, the Bishop of *Vercell*, earnestly requested the father-general of the *Barnabites*, to seek
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among the Religious a man of merit, piety and learning, in whom he might place a confidence, and who might serve him for a prebend and a counsellor. At first he cast his eyes on Father *La Combe*; yet before he absolutely engaged him with the said bishop, he wrote to him, to know, "whether he had any objection thereto." Father *La Combe* replied, "that he had no other will but that of obeying him, and that he might command him herein as he should think best in the case." He gave me an account of this, and that we were going to be entirely separated. I was glad to find that our LORD would employ him, under a Bishop who knew him, and would be likely to do him justice. Yet it was some time before he went, matters not being all fixed.

C H A P. XV.

I THEN went off from the *Ursulines*, and they sought for a house for me at a distance from the Lake. There was but one to be found empty, which had the look of the greatest poverty. It had no chimney but in the kitchen through which one was obliged to pass to go to the chamber. I took my daughter with me, and gave up the largest chamber for her, and the maid who was to take care of her. I was lodged in a little hole, on straw, to which I went up by a ladder. As we had no other furniture than our beds, which were quite plain and homely, I bought some straw chairs and bosses with Dutch earthen and wooden ware. Never did I enjoy a greater content than in this little hole, which appeared so very conformable to the state of littleness of JESUS CHRIST: I fancied every thing better

better on wood than on plate. I laid in all my provisions, hoping to stay there a long time, but the Devil did not leave me long in such sweet peace. It would be difficult for me to tell the persecutions which were stirred up against me. They threw stones in at my windows, which fell at my feet. I had got my little garden put in order. They came in the night, tore it all up, broke down the arbour, and overturned every thing in it, as if it had been ravaged by soldiers. They came to abuse me at the door all night long, making such a racket as if they were going to break it open. These persons have since told who put them on such work. Though from time to time I continued my charities at *Gex*, I was not the less persecuted for it. They offered one person a * warrant to compel Father *La Combe* to stay at *Tonon*, thinking he would otherwise be a support to me in the persecution, but we prevented it. I knew not then the designs of God, and that he would soon draw me from that poor solitary place, in which I had enjoyed a sweet and solid satisfaction, notwithstanding the abuses from without. I thought myself happier here than any Sovereign on earth. It was for me like a *nest* and a *place of repose*: And CHRIST was willing that I should be like him. The Devil, as I have said, irritated my persecutors. They sent to desire me to go out of the diocese. All the good which the LORD had caused me to do in it was condemned, more than the greatest crimes. Those crimes they tolerated, but me they could not endure. All this while I never had any uneasiness or repentance for my having left all, not that I was assured of having done the
will

* Lettre de Cachet.

will of GOD therein : Such an assurance would have been too much for me. But I could neither see nor regard any thing, receiving every thing alike from the hand of my GOD, who directed and disposed these crosses for me either in justice or in mercy.

THE Marchioness of *Prunai*, sister of the chief secretary of state to his Royal Highness (the Duke of *Savoy*) and his prime minister, had sent an express from *Turin*, in the time of my illness, to invite me to come to reside with her ; and to let me know that, “ being so persecuted as I was “ in this diocese, I should find an asylum with “ her ; that during that time things might grow “ better ; that when they should be well disposed, “ she would return with me, and join me with “ a friend of mine from *Paris*, who was willing “ also to come to labour there, according to the “ will of GOD.” I was not at that time in a condition to execute what she desired of me, and expected to continue with the *Ursulines* till things should change. She then wrote to me about it no more. This lady is one of extraordinary piety, who had quitted the splendour and noise of the court for the more silent satisfaction of a retired life, and to give herself up to GOD. With an eminent share of natural advantages, she has continued a widow twenty-two years ; and has refused every offer of marriage, to consecrate herself to our LORD entirely and without any reserve. When she knew that I had been obliged to leave the *Ursulines*, yet without knowing any thing of the manner in which I had been treated, she procured a letter to oblige Father *La Combe* to go to pass some weeks at *Turin*, for her own benefit, and to bring me with him thither, where I should

I should find a refuge. All this she did unknown to us; and, as she has told us since, a superior force moved her to do it, without knowing the cause thereof. If she had deliberately reflected on it, being such a prudent lady, she probably would not have done it: For the persecutions, which the Bishop of *Geneva* procured us in that place, cost her more than a little of humiliations. Our LORD permitted him to pursue me, after a surprizing manner, into all the places I have been in, without giving me any relaxation, though I never did him any harm; but on the contrary would have lain down my life for the good of his diocese.

As this fell out without any design on our part, we, without any hesitation, believed it was the will of GOD; and thought it might be the means of his appointment to draw us out of the reproach and persecution we laboured under, seeing myself chased on the one side, and desired on the other; it was therefore concluded that Father *La Combe* should conduct me to *Turin*, and that he should go from thence to *Verceil*.

BESIDE him I took with me a religious man of merit, who had taught Theology for fourteen years past, in order to do things with the more decency, and to take away from our enemies all the subjects of slander. I also took with me a boy whom I had brought out of *France*, and who had learned the taylor's trade. They took horses, and I hired a litter for my daughter, my chamber-maid and myself: But all precautions are useless, when it pleases GOD to permit them to be frustrated. Our adversaries immediately wrote off to *Paris*. A hundred ridiculous stories were circulated

circulated about this journey; comedies were acted on it, things invented at pleasure, and as false as any in the world could be. It was Father *De La Mothe* who was so active in uttering all this stuff. Had he believed it to be true, he ought out of charity to have concealed it; and much more, being so very false. They said, "I was gone all alone with Father *La Combe*, strolling about the country, from province to province," with many such fables, as weak and wicked as they were incoherent and badly put together. We suffered all with patience, without vindicating ourselves, or making any complaint: And if things be coolly and impartially considered, could I do any better in the condition I was in? Was it not both honourable and of real advantage for me to be with a lady of such quality and merit? Was it not sufficient to cut off the course of malediction? Do disorderly persons choose houses of that sort? But passion has no eyes, and calumny is a torrent which drowns all reason.

SCARCE were we arrived at *Turin*, but the Bishop of *Geneva* wrote against us. As he could pursue us no other way, he did it by his letters. Father *La Combe* repaired to *Vercell*, and I staid at *Turin*, with the Marchioness of *Prunai*. But what crosses was I assaulted with in my own family, from the Bishop of *Geneva*, from the *Barnabites*, and from a vast number of persons besides! My eldest son came to find me out, on the death of my mother-in-law, which was an augmentation of my troubles; but after we had heard all his accounts of things, and how they had made sales of all the moveables, chosen Guardians, and settled every article, without consulting me

me at all, I seemed to be there entirely useless. It was judged not proper for me to return, considering the rigour of the season.

THE Marchioness of *Prunai*, who had been so warmly desirous of my company, seeing my great crosses and reproaches, looked coldly upon me. My child-like simplicity, which was the state wherein at that time GOD kept me, passed with her for stupidity, though in that condition he inspired me to utter oracles ; for when the question was to help any one, or about any thing which GOD required of me, he gave me, with the weakness of a child, which appeared in pure candour, the evident tokens of divine strength. Her heart was quite shut up to me all the time I was there. Our LORD however made me foretel all that should fall out, and which since that time has actually been fulfilled, as well to herself as to her daughter, and to the virtuous Ecclesiastic, who lived at her house. She did not fail, at last, to conceive more friendship for me, seeing then that CHRIST was in me. It was the force of self-love, and fear of reproach, which had closed up her heart. Moreover she thought her state more advanced than in reality it was, by reason of her being without probations ; but she soon saw by experience that I had told her the truth. She was obliged for family reasons to leave *Turin*, and go to live on her own estate. She solicited me to go with her ; but the education of my daughter did not permit my compliance. To stay at *Turin* without her seemed improper, because, having lived very retired in this place, I made no acquaintance in it. I knew not which way to turn. The Bishop of *Verceil*, where Father *La Combe* was, most obligingly wrote to me, earnestly

earnestly entreating me to come thither, promising me his protection, and assuring me of his esteem, adding, "that he should look upon me as "his own sister; that he wished extremely to "have me there." It was his own sister, a *religious* of the visitation of *Turin*, one of my particular friends, who had wrote to him about me, as had also a French gentleman, an acquaintance of his. But a point of honour kept me from it. I would not have it said that I had gone after Father *La Combe*, and that I had come to *Turin*, only for the purpose of going to *Vercueil*. He had also his reputation to preserve, which was the cause that he could not agree to my going thither, however importunate the Bishop was for it. Had we believed it to be the will of God, we should both of us have passed over these considerations. God kept us both in so great a dependance on his orders, that he did not let us foreknow them; but the *divine moment* of his Providence determined every thing. This proved of very great service to Father *La Combe*, who had long walked in assurances, to die to them and to himself; for God by an effect of his goodness, that he might thus die without any reserve, took them all away from him.

DURING the whole time of my residence at *Turin*, our LORD conferred on me very great favours. I found myself every day more transformed into him, and had continually more knowledge of the state of souls, without ever being mistaken or deceived therein, though some were willing to persuade me to think the contrary. I had used my utmost endeavours to give myself other thoughts, which has cost me not a little. For when I told, or wrote to Father

La Combe about the state of some souls, which appeared to him more perfect and advanced than the knowledge given to me of them, he attributed it to pride; he was very angry with me, and prejudiced against my state. I had no uneasiness on account of his esteeming me the less, for I was not in a condition to reflect whether he esteemed me or not. He could not reconcile (God so permitting it, to take from him every support) an obedience to a miracle in most things, with so extraordinary a firmness, which in certain cases he looked on as criminal. He admitted a distrust of my grace; for he was not yet sufficiently confirmed in his way, nor did he duly comprehend, that it did not in any wise depend on me, to be either one way or other; and that if I had any such power, I should have suited myself to what he said, to spare myself the crosses which that caused me; or at least would have artfully dissembled my real sentiments. But I could do neither. Were all to perish by it, I was in such a manner constrained, that I could not forbear telling him the things, just as our LORD directed me to tell them to him. In this he has given me an inviolable fidelity to the very last. No crosses or pains have ever made me fail a moment therein. These things then, which appeared to him to be the strong prejudice of a concerted opinion, set him at variance against me. And though he did not openly shew it, but on the contrary tried to conceal it from me, yet how far distant soever he were from me, I could not be ignorant of it; my spirit felt it, and that more or less, as the opposition was stronger or weaker; and as soon as it abated or ended, my pain, occasioned thereby, ceased. He also on his side, experienced the like. He has told me and wrote to
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me many times over, " When I stand well with God, I find I am well with you : When I am otherwise with him, I then find myself to be so with you too." Thus he saw clearly that when God received him into his bosom, it was always in uniting him to me, as if he would accept of nothing from him but in this union.

WHILE he was at *Turin*, a widow who was a good servant of God, all in the brightness of sensibility, came to him to confess. She uttered wonderful things of her state. I was then at the other side of the confessional. He told me, " He had met with a soul given up to God, that it was she who was present, that he was very much edified by her ; that he was far from finding the like in me ; that I operated nothing but death upon his soul." At first I rejoiced at his having met with such a holy soul, as it ever gives me the highest joy to see my God glorified. As I was returning, the LORD shewed me clearly the state of that soul, as only a beginning of devotion mixt with affection and a little silence, filled with a new sensation. This and more, as it was set before me, I was obliged to write to him upon it. On his first reading of my letter he discovered the stamp of truth in it ; but soon after, letting in again his old reflections, he viewed all I wrote in the light of pride. For he still had in his mind the ordinary rules of humility conceived and comprized after our manner. As to me, I let myself be led as a child, who says and does, without distinction, whatever it is made to say and do. I left myself to be led wheresoever my heavenly Father pleased, high or low ; all was alike good to me.

HE wrote to me, that, at his first reading of my letter, there appeared in it something of truth, but that on reading it over again, he found it to be full of pride, and of a preference of my own discernment to that of others. I knew the moment when he opened my letter, and entered into the truth of it. When the maid, by whom I sent it, who was that maid which our LORD had brought me, was returned, I told her this; and she assured me that it was the very time when he had read my letter. Sometime after he was more enlightened hereupon, and in regard to the state I was in. He then said to me, "Continue to believe as you have done; I encourage and exhort you to do it." Upon which I began to respire, to recover new life and an enlargement of soul. "Let nobody (*said I to myself as I was returning*) speak to me any more of humility. The ideas which people generally have of virtues are not for me. There is nothing else for me but that one thing, *viz.* ever singly to obey my GOD." Some time after he sufficiently discovered, by that person's manner of acting, that she was very far from what he had thought of her. I give this only as one instance. I might give many others nearly like it; but this may suffice.

C H A P. XVI.

ONE night in a dream our LORD shewed me, that he would also purify the maid whom he had given me, and make her truly enter into death to herself. I then freely resolved to suffer for her, as I did for Father *La Combe*. As she resisted God much more than he, and was much more under the power of self-love, she had more
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to be purified from. For this maid I have borne much, during three whole years. Our LORD caused me incessantly to do miracles on her account. It seemed as if he gave me an absolute power over both her body and soul. How much soever she was indisposed, as soon as I said to her, "Be healed," she was so : And for her pain, I bore the most of it. It seems as if our LORD had given me some share of experience for her, of what he himself had suffered for men. Surely a small part thereof would have consumed ten thousand worlds. He shewed me, in a dream, her resistances, under the figure of sundry animals, coming out of her body, whose outsides appeared pure, bright and transparent as glass, but all unclean within. Hereby I knew that she had passed through the first purification, or cleansing of the outside, for which reason she had passed in the world for a saint, ~~but~~ far from being inwardly purified. While on that account I suffered, I saw those animals destroy one another, till there remained only one, which devoured all the rest ; yet itself appeared to have all the iniquity of the others in it. What I could not tolerate in her was her regard for *herself*. I saw clearly that the devil cannot hurt us, but so far as we retain some fondness for this corrupt *self*. This sight was from God, who gave me the discerning of spirits, which would ever accept what was from him, or reject what was not ; and that not from any common methods of judging, not from any outward information, but by an inward principle which is his gift alone.

THAT this point be not mistaken, it is needful to mention here that souls which are yet *in themselves*, whatever degree of light and ardour they have

have attained, are unqualified for it. They often think they have this discernment, when it is nothing else but sympathy or antipathy of nature. Our LORD had destroyed in me every sort of natural antipathy. The soul must be very pure, and depending on GOD alone, that all these things may be experienced in him. In proportion as this maid became inwardly purified my pain abated, till the LORD let me know her state was going to be changed, which soon happily ensued. In comparison of inward pains for souls, outward persecutions, though ever so violent, scarce gave me any. The Bishop of *Geneva* wrote to different kinds of persons: He wrote in my favour to such as he thought would shew me his letters, and quite the contrary in the letters which he thought I should never see. It was so ordered, that these persons, having shewed each other their letters received from him, were struck with indignation to see in him so shameful a duplicity. They sent me those letters that I might take proper precautions. I kept them two years, and then burnt them, not to hurt the prelate by them. The strongest battery he raised against me was what he did with the secretary of state, who held that post in conjunction with the Marchioness of *Prunai's* brother. He used all imaginable endeavours to render me odious, and to cry me down. He employed certain Abbots for that purpose, inasmuch that, though I appeared very little abroad, I was well known by the descriptions this Bishop had given of me. This did not make so much impression as it would have done, if he had appeared in a better light at Court: Some letters of his, which her royal highness found, after the Prince's death, which he had wrote to him against her, had that effect on the Princess, that, (instead
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of taking any notice of what he now wrote against me) she shewed me great respect, and sent her request to me to come to see her. Accordingly I waited on her. She assured me of her protection, and that she was glad of my being in her dominions.

* OUR LORD discovered to me in a dream, that he called me, in order that I should *help my neighbour*. Of all the mysterious dreams I have had, there never was any which made more impression on me than this, and whose unction of grace continued longer. It seemed to me that, being with one of my intimates, we went up a steep mountain, at the foot of which was a stormy sea, full of dangerous shoals, which one must have crossed before coming to this mountain, which was all covered with cypresses. When we had got up to the top of it, we there found another mountain inclosed with fragrant hedges all round, having a gate for entrance, which was locked. We knocked at it, but my companion descended back again, or stayed at the gate; for she entered not with me. The master came and opened the gate to me, and immediately closed it again. Taking me by the hand, he led me into the wood, which was of cedars. This mountain was called *Lebanon*. In this wood there was a lodge, and in it two beds. Hither he brought me. I asked him, "For whom are these?" He answered me, "One for my mother, and the other for thee, my spouse." In this chamber were animals naturally wild, and enemies to one another, all changed in their natures, all living together in a delightful and admirable concord; the cat and the bird, the wolf and the lamb, all sporting

* In the year 1684.

sporting together ; all respectfully and joyfully saluted me. I remembered hereupon the prophecy of *Isaiah*, xi. 6. and the chamber mentioned in the *Canticles*, iii. 4. This place breathed nothing but candour and innocence. I perceived in it a boy of about twelve years of age. The Spouse desired him to see if there were any that had escaped from the shipwreck. His service was only to go to the foot of the mountain, to try if he could spy any one. The Spouse turning to me, said, "I have chosen thee, my spouse, "to bring hither with thee all the persons who "shall have courage and resolution enough to "embark on this sea, and to suffer shipwreck "there." The boy returned and told him, "that he did not yet see any one escaped from "the shipwreck." Thereupon I awaked, much affected with this dream. The sweet impression it left on my spirit continued many days.

My interior state grew still more firm, and my heart so pure that not any imagination entered it, but such as it pleased the LORD to raise. Mine was such a state as is beyond all the power of expression to describe, every motion of the creature so entirely lost, that though outwardly it be free, inwardly it is not, even for the least thing in the world ; all its movements and actions being now in GOD, and under the dominion of his will, in entire union with him, the soul living in and of GOD, as the body lives in and of the air it breathes. This state is known of GOD only. Such souls are, as to their exterior, only common, though precious in the sight of GOD. Though they are the objects of his delight, they are often the butt of the rage and scorn of the creatures.

C H A P.

C H A P. XVII.

IT pleased GOD here to make use of me to the conversion of two or three Ecclesiasticks. But I had much to suffer from their repugnances and many infidelities—one of whom had villified me greatly—and even after his conversion turned aside into his old ways ; but GOD at length graciously restored him.

BEFORE his last return I saw (in a dream) a great number of very beautiful birds, which every one was pursuing with great emulation and eagerness to catch. I beheld them all without taking part therein, and without wishing to catch any of them. I was not a little surprized, to see that they all came to offer themselves to me, without my using any effort to take them. Among them there was one of an extraordinary beauty, which far surpassed all the others. Every body was eager to get this : But it escaped them all, and me too as well as the rest ; but afterwards it returned to offer itself to me, when I no longer expected it. There was one of the others which after having come in the like manner, fluttered for a long time, one while offering itself, another while retiring, but at length gave itself up intirely. This last appeared to me to be the religious man I have been just speaking of. Others fled quite away. But the beautiful bird, which had not any rival,* is not unknown to me, though he has not come yet. Be it either before or after my death, I am assured the time will come

* Perhaps FENELON, Archbishop of Cambray.

come when he will wholly give himself up to God.

As I was with the Marchioness of *Prunai*, undetermined whether I should place my daughter at the Visitation of *Turin*, to go thither with her, or take some other course; I was exceedingly surprized, at a time I least expected it, to see Father *La Combe* arrive from *Vercell*, and tell me, "I must return to *Paris* without any delay." It was in the evening, and he said, "I must set off next morning." I confess this sudden news startled me. It was for me a double sacrifice, to return to a place where they had cried me down so much; and towards a family which held me in contempt, and who had represented my journey (caused by pure necessity) as a voluntary course, pursued through human attachments. Behold me then disposed to go off, without offering a single word in reply, with my daughter and my chambermaid, without any body to guide and attend us; for Father *La Combe* was resolved not to accompany me, not so much as in passing the mountains; because the Bishop of *Geneva* had writ on all sides that I was gone to *Turin*, to run after him: But the father provincial, who was a man of quality, and well acquainted with the virtue of Father *La Combe*, told him, "that it was improper and unsafe to venture on these mountains, without some persons of my acquaintance; and the more as I had my little daughter with me; and that he therefore ordered him to accompany me." Father *La Combe* confessed to me that he had some reluctance to do it, and that only obedience, and the danger to which I should have been exposed, made him surmount it. He was only to accom-
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pany me to *Grenoble*, and from thence to return to *Turin*. I went off then, designing for *Paris*, there to suffer whatever crosses and trials it should please God to inflict.

WHAT made me pass by *Grenoble* was the desire I had to spend two or three days with a lady, an eminent servant of God, and one of my friends. When I was there Father *La Combe* and that lady spoke to me not to go any farther; that God would glorify himself in me and by me in that place. He returned to *Vercueil*, and I left myself to be conducted as a child by Providence. This lady took me to the house of a good widow, there not being accommodations at the inn; and as I was ordered to stop at *Grenoble*, at her house I resided. I placed my daughter in a convent, and resolved to employ all this time in resigning myself to be possessed in solitude by Him who is the absolute Sovereign of my soul. I made not any visit in this place; no more had I in any of the others where I had sojourned. But I was greatly surprized when, a few days after my arrival, there came to see me several persons who made profession of a singular devotion to God. I perceived immediately a gift which he had given me, both of discerning spirits and of administering to each that which suited their states. I felt myself invested, all on a sudden, with the apostolic state, and discerned the conditions of the souls of such persons as spoke to me, and that with so much facility, that they were surprized at it, and said one to another, "that I gave every one of them the very thing they had stood in need of." It was thou, oh my God, who didst all these things; some of them sent others to me. It came to such an excess, that, generally from
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six in the morning till eight in the evening, I was taken up in speaking of God. People flocked on all sides, far and near, friars, priests, men of the world, maids, wives, widows, all came one after another; and God supplied me with what was pertinent and satisfactory to them all, after a wonderful manner, without any share of my study or meditation therein. Nothing was hid from me of their interior state, and of what passed within them. Here, oh my God, thou made an infinite number of conquests known to thyself only. They were instantly furnished with a wonderful facility of prayer. God conferred on them his grace plentifully, and wrought marvellous changes in them. The most advanced of these souls found, when with me, in silence, a grace communicated to them which they could neither comprehend, nor cease to admire. The others found an unction in my words, and that they operated in them what I said to them. They said, "they had never experienced any thing like it." Friars of different orders, and priests of merit, came to see me, to whom our LORD granted very great favours, as indeed he did to all, without exception, who came in sincerity.

ONE thing was surprizing, which was, that I had not a syllable to say to such as came only to watch my words, and to criticise on them. Even when I thought to try to speak to them, I felt that I could not, and that God would not have me do it. Some of them in return said, "The people are fools to go to see that lady. She cannot speak." Others of them treated me as if I were only a stupid simpleton. After they left me there came one and said, "I could not get hither soon enough to apprize you not to speak

“ speak to those persons ; they come from such
 “ and such, to try what they can catch from you
 “ to your disadvantage.” I answered them,
 “ Our LORD has prevented your charity ; for I
 “ was not able to say one word to them.”

I FELT that what I spoke flowed from the fountain, and that I was only the instrument of him who made me speak. Amidst this general applause, our LORD made me comprehend what the apostolic state was, with which he had honoured me ; that to give one’s self up to the help of souls, in the purity of his Spirit, was to expose one’s self to the most cruel persecutions. These very words were imprinted on my heart : “ To
 “ resign ourselves to serve our neighbour is to
 “ sacrifice ourselves to a gibbet. Such as now
 “ proclaim, *Blessed is he who cometh in the Name
 “ of the LORD*, will soon cry out, *Take away, crucify.*” One of my friends speaking of the general esteem the people had for me, I said to her,
 “ Observe what I now tell you, that you will
 “ hear curses out of the same mouths which at
 “ present pronounce blessings.” Our LORD made me comprehend that I must be conformable to him in all his states ; and that, if he had continued in a private life with his parents, he never had been crucified ; that, when he would resign any of his servants to crucifixion, he employed such in the ministry and service of their neighbours. It is certain that all the souls employed herein by apostolic destination from God, and who are truly in the apostolic state, are to suffer extremely. I speak not of those who put themselves into it, who, not being called of God in a singular manner, and having nothing of the grace of the apostleship, have none of its crosses ; but
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of those only who surrender themselves to God without any reserve, and who are willing with their whole hearts to be exposed, for his sake, to sufferings without any mitigation. They must assuredly become *a spectacle to God, to angels, and to men*; to God, of glory, by their conformity to JESUS CHRIST; to angels, of joy; and to men, of cruelty and ignominy.

C H A P. XVIII.

AMONG so great a number of good souls, on whom our LORD wrought much by me, some were given me only as plants to cultivate. I knew their state, but had not that near connection with, or authority over them, which I had over others. It was then that I comprehended the true maternity beyond what I had done before; for those of the latter kind were given me as children, of whom some were faithful. I knew they would be so; and they were closely united to me in pure charity. Others were unfaithful; I knew that of these some would never return from their infidelity, and they were taken from me; some, after slipping aside, were recovered. Both of them cost me much distress and inward pain, when, for want of courage to die to themselves, they gave up the point; and revolted from the good beginning they had been favoured with.

OUR LORD, amongst such multitudes as followed him on earth, had few true children. Wherefore he said to his Father, "Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition," shewing here-
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by that he lost not any beside of his apostles, or disciples, though they sometimes made false steps.

AMONG the different numbers of friars who came to see me, there was one order which discovered the good effects of grace more than any other. Some of that very order had before this, in a little town where Father *La Combe* was in the exercise of his mission, been actuated with a false zeal, and violent in persecuting all the good souls which had sincerely dedicated themselves to God, plaguing them after such a manner as can scarce be conceived, burning all their books which treated of silence and inward prayer, refusing absolution to such as were in the practice of it, driving into consternation, and almost into despair, such as had formerly led wicked lives, but were now reformed, and preserved in grace by means of prayer, becoming spotless and blameless in their conduct. These friars had proceeded to such an excess of wild zeal as to raise a sedition in that town, in which a father of the oratory, a person of distinction and merit, received strokes with a stick in the open street, because he prayed extempore in the evenings, and on Sundays made a short fervent prayer, which insensibly habituated these good souls to the use and practice of the like.

I NEVER in all my life had so much consolation as to see in this little town so many pious souls who with a heavenly emulation gave up their whole hearts to God. There were girls of twelve or thirteen years of age, who industriously followed their work almost all the day long, in silence, and in their employments enjoyed a communion with God, having acquired a fixed habit herein. As these girls were poor, they

they placed themselves two and two together, and such as could do it read to the others who could not. One saw there the innocence of the primitive christians revived. There was in that town a poor laundress who had five children, and a husband paralytic, lame in the right arm, and yet worse distempered in mind than in body. He had little strength left for any thing else than to beat her : Yet this poor woman bore it with all the meekness and patience of an angel, while she by her labour supported him and his five children. She had a wonderful gift of prayer, and amidst her great suffering and extreme poverty, preserved the presence of GOD, and tranquillity of mind. There was also a shop-keeper, and one who made locks, very much affected with GOD. These were close friends. Sometimes the one and sometimes the other read to this laundress ; and they were surprized to find that she was instructed by the LORD himself in all they read to her, and spoke divinely of it.

THOSE friars sent for this woman, and threatened her much if she did not leave off prayer, telling her it was only for churchmen to pray, and that she was very bold to practice it. She replied, (or rather he who instructed her, for she was very ignorant of herself) “ that CHRIST had “ commanded all to pray, and that he had said “ *What I say unto you I say unto all.* Mark xiii, “ 33. 37. without specifying either priests or friars ; that without prayer she could not support “ her crosses and poverty ; that formerly she had “ lived without it, and then was very wicked ; “ that since she had been in the exercise of it, “ she had loved GOD with all her soul ; so that “ to leave off prayer was to renounce her salvation, which she could not do.” She added “ that

“ that they might take twenty persons who had never practised prayer, and twenty of those who were in the practise of it : Then, *said she*, inform yourselves of the lives of both sorts, and ye will see if ye have any reason to cry out against prayer.” Such words as these, from such a woman, one would think might have fully convinced them ; but (instead of that) they only irritated them the more. They assured her “ she should have no absolution till she promised them to desist from prayer.” She said, “ It depended not on her, and that CHRIST is master of what he communicates to his creatures, and of doing with it what he pleases.” They refused her absolution ; and after railing at a good taylor, who served God with his whole heart, they ordered all the books without exception, which treated on prayer to be brought to them, and burned them with their own hands in the public square. They were hugely elated with their performance : But all the town presently arose in an uproar, on account of the late insolent and intolerable usage given to the father of the oratory. The principal men went to the Bishop of *Geneva*, and complained to him of the scandals of these new missionaries, so different from the others. Speaking of Father *La Combe*, who had been there before them on his mission, they said “ these seemed as if they were sent to destroy all the good he had done.” The Bishop was forced to come himself to that town, and there to mount the pulpit, protesting he had no share in it, and that these fathers had pushed their zeal too far. The friars, on the other side declared, *they had done all they did, pursuant to the orders given them.*

THERE were also at *Tonon* young women who had retired together, being poor villagers, the
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better to earn their livelihood and to serve GOD; One of them read from time to time, while the others were at work, and not one went out without asking leave of the eldest. They wove ribbands, or spun, and the strong supporting the weak. They separated these poor girls, and others beside them, in several villages, and drove them out of the church.

IT was then the friars of this very order whom our LORD made use of to establish prayer in I know not how many places. And, into the places where they went, they carried a hundred times more books of prayer than those which their brethren had burned. The hand of GOD appeared to me wonderfully in these things. I had then occasion to know these friars in the way I am going to tell.

ONE day that I was sick, a brother, who has skill in diseases, and is useful therein, being come for a charitable collection, and hearing I was ill, came in to me, and gave me medicines proper for my disorder. We entered into a conversation which revived in him the love he had for GOD, which he acknowledged had been too much stifled by his great occupations. I made him comprehend that there was no employments which should hinder him from loving GOD, and from being occupied within himself. He readily believed me, as he already had a good share of piety, and of an interior disposition. Our LORD conferred on him many favours, and gave him to be one of my true children. What is wonderful is, that all those whom he has given me are brought forth by me on the cross, in which sense he causes me *to fill up that which is behind of his passion:*

passion : (Col. i. 24.) Oh goodness of God thus to associate poor creatures to his great mysteries!

WHEN our LORD gives me children after this manner, he gives them a very particular affection for me. They cannot forbear calling me their mother ; which has been the case of many, and some of great note. Several whom I did not know but by their letters, have seen me in dreams resolving all their difficulties. I have found that when our LORD honours *a soul* with spiritual fruitfulness, he gives *it* what is necessary to nourish and support *its* children, according to their different degrees. I was sometimes so filled with these divine communications that I have been ready to cry out, “ Oh, my LORD, give me hearts to relieve “ myself of my fulness.” When some of my children came to me, or new ones were given me, in whom grace was already strong, I was eased and comforted ; they also felt an inconceivable plenitude of grace, and a greater gift of prayer, each according to their degree ; which surprized them greatly at the first, and made them, when necessity separated me from them, feel a great want of me. But afterwards they experimentally comprehended this mystery ; and when necessity separated me from them, or I did not know them, having never seen them, instructions and consolations were communicated to them even afar off.

C H A P. XIX.

THERE were there some good young women, who were particularly given me ; and especially one who had felt a very great attraction to come to me : And our LORD gave her
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by me all she had need of; but when at a distance from me, she was strongly tempted, and then afraid to return to me; yet when she took courage and came, her pains and fears were all dissipated, and she experienced, while she was with me, that fulness of grace which is come by JESUS CHRIST: Yet after this she was tempted so far as to imagine me to be a sorceress: And that it was thereby, that I had driven away from her the evil spirit which had assaulted her, and that I had foretold her what would befall her, which actually did happen accordingly. Under such an impression on her mind she came to me, but opened not her lips. I knew her uneasiness, told her of it, and she confessed it. When we were at church, I said to her, "If it is an evil spirit which causes me to act towards you, let him continue to torment you; if it be a good spirit I pray that during the service you may partake of that spirit." At the very beginning of the service her soul flowed with a peace of paradise, and was in so great an union with God, that she scarce knew whether she was in earth or in heaven. After that manner was our communion, and then she said in herself; "Oh, how certain I am now that it is God who moves and guides her!" After prayers were over, she said to me, "Oh my mother, how fully sensible have I been that God is all in all in you! I have been in paradise."

WHEN at any time after this she made slips, and concealed them from me, or covered them with disguises, I felt it at first; and that our LORD who loves and accepts of nothing but pure sincerity, rejected her therein. I saw, or rather experienced, how God rejects sinners from his bosom,

bosom. All the cause of God's rejection is in the *will* and inclination of the sinner. If that *will* ceases, how horrible soever he be, God purifies him in his love, and receives him into his grace; but while that *will* remains, the rejection continues; though for want of ability seconding his inclination, he should not commit the sin he is inclined to, yet he never can be admitted into grace till the cause ceases, which is this wrong *will*, rebellious to the divine law. If that once ceases, God then totally removes the effects of sin, which stain the soul, by washing away the new defilements which he has contracted. If that sinner dies in the time that his *will* is rebellious and turned towards sin, as death fixes for ever the disposition of the soul, and the cause of its impurity is ever subsisting, such soul can never be received into God; its rejection must be eternal, as there is such an absolute opposition betwixt essential purity and essential impurity. And as this soul, from its own nature necessarily tends to its own centre, it is continually rejected from thence, by reason of its impurity, subsisting not only in the effects, but in their cause. It is the same way in this life. This cause, so long as it subsists, absolutely hinders the grace of God from operating in the soul. But if the sinner comes to die truly penitent, then the cause, which is the wrong *will*, being taken away, there remains only the effect or impurity caused by it. He is then in a condition to be purified. God of his infinite mercy has provided a laver of love and of justice, a painful laver indeed, to purify this soul. And as the defilement is greater or less, so is the pain; but when the cause is utterly taken away, the pain entirely ceases. Now, I say, it is the very same here. Souls are re-

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ceived into grace, as soon as the cause of sin ceases ; but they do not pass into GOD himself, till all its effects are washed away. If they have not courage to let him, in his own way and will, thoroughly cleanse and purify them, they never enter into the pure divinity in this life. As this purification, is not effected but by pain, and the destruction of all the selfish wisdom and desires, this is the cause, why many pious souls, highly applauded of men, have still need of farther purification. Those who have not come so far as to be quite fixed in the pure love of GOD, are ever liable to change, and to transgress in some points in the will, or natural inclination, till they be dead to themselves, and passed into GOD, who renders the *will* in this state immutable ; all that nature, that leaven which may be ever making it rise again, which is *self-love* in its many forms, some of them seeming both lawful and commendable in the sight of men, being thoroughly purged away, which GOD is very willing to do for us in this life : But this is not effected but by severe and extreme pains to us, and the loss of every support of artful corrupt *self*. Hence the souls truly changed into his image, are more rare than I can set forth or express.

To return to my subject, I experienced that this young woman stuck to me still by a certain secret tie, as a sinner does to his GOD, from whence he may still be received in him, when the cause of the rejection ceases. GOD incessantly solicits this *will* to cease to be rebellious, and spares nothing on his side for this good end. The *will* is free, yet grace follows it still. As soon as the *will* ceases to rebel, it finds grace at the door; ready to introduce its unspeakable benefits. Oh the

the goodness of GOD and baseness of the sinner, each of them amazing when clearly seen ! I felt, I say, how this young woman and many other souls stuck to mine by a tie of filiation ; but I found I could no more communicate grace to her as I had done, by reason of her want of simplicity in the *will*, and that it was impossible for the divine efflux to enter, till her dissimulation were destroyed, though I loved her much ; but that *will* in her occasioned the rejection, which could not end but by its change. How wonderful is GOD to give to poor creatures the experimental knowledge of his deep and mysterious secrets ! For what I have experienced in respect of her I have done in regard to sundry others. But I have given her case as one example. Father *La Combe* thought her virtuous : When I told him a little of this fault of her's, he accused me of rash judgment, which indeed was far from me ; but he afterwards came to see for himself enough of her craft and artifice.

BEFORE I arrived at *Grenoble*, the lady, my friend there, saw in a dream that our LORD gave me an infinite number of children all uniformly clad, bearing on their habits the marks of candour and innocence. She thought I was coming to take care of the children of the hospital. But as soon as she told me it, I discerned that it was not that which the dream meant ; but that our LORD would give me, by a spiritual fruitfulness, a great number of children ; that they would not be my true children but in simplicity, candour and innocence. So great an aversion I have to artifice and disguise.

C H A P. XX.

THE good brother I have spoken of (Chap. xviii.) found himself disposed to lay open his heart to me like a child. Our LORD gave him through me all that was necessary for him; for though disposed to the spiritual life, yet for want of courage and fidelity he had not duly advanced in it. Hereupon he said unto me, "You are my true mother." From that time GOD has granted him many favours through this poor nothing creature. I felt he was one of my sons, one of the most faithful and closely united. Every time he came to see me, he became more encouraged and fortified to die thoroughly to himself, sensibly assured of the power of GOD in me, which he felt, in his dependant state. Our LORD instructed him in silence, and prepared him to receive his grace, without the mediation of words, which carried on its operation in him, in proportion as he died more to himself. CHRIST has declared, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them." With the greatest certainty, through his blessed operations, is this experienced. As this brother was already advanced in the spiritual life, and had only stopped and been retarded in it, he was soon recovered hereby.

IN proportion as his soul advanced sufficiently for continuing in silence before GOD, and as the Word operated on him in silence, being vivid and fruitful, and not a state of indolence, as some ignorantly imagine, he thereby grew in grace. Oh, immediate, ineffable Word! who tellest

tellest us every thing without articulating any thing! He who has never experienced thee knows nothing.—It was then given to him to communicate with me in silence the operations of that divine Word, the fulness thereof in him became more abundant, like a sluice lifted up, which discharges itself with profusion, and that with so much force and grace in souls well disposed, that the full river does not flow with more impetuosity. But alas! how few souls are pure enough for this enjoyment passing in them after such a manner! This fulness which he received still emptied him more of himself, putting him in a state of deeper silence before God, and a greater detachment from every thing else. It still disposed him more both for God and for me.

OH my God, how well I comprehended in this silence that in souls which are wholly thine thy grace flows like a river! This is that *well of water springing up into everlasting life*; the great mystery which CHRIST spoke of, and revealed to the Samaritan woman. It springs up in such abundance that there is a sufficiency in it for filling an infinite number of souls, each according to its degree, without ceasing to be full. Oh admirable hierarchy, which begins in this life, to continue through all eternity! Yes, there is a hierarchy among saints on earth, even as among angels in heaven. And those who have served as conduits to water their souls, shall continue such in eternity. The water of life will flow from the sacred source into the souls of all those who have lived by grace, more or less, as they are fitted, extended or dilated to receive of its abundance. And it requires more of largeness and extent both to receive and to communicate abundantly to others. Those

who are dead in sin receive nothing of this plénitude of life. Through the want of this they may properly be said to be dead ; all the passages, by which life might flow into them, being closed up by sin. But souls living in the pure love of God all receive from this fulness more or less, according as they are disposed or fitted for it by the purity and receptivity of the soul. But all who are come so far as to receive the grace, are not from thence in a condition to communicate it. They have a great way to advance before they become fitted for that.

THIS good brother had occasion to bring to me some of his companions ; and God took hold of them all. It was at the very time that God gave me these good Religious, that the others of the same order were making all the ravages I have mentioned, and opposing with all their might the holy spirit of God. I could not but admire to see how God was pleased to make himself amends for former damages, by the pouring out his spirit in abundance on these good friars, while the others were labouring vehemently against it, doing all they could to destroy its dominion and efficacy in their fellow-mortals. But their labours of this kind had no great effect ; those good souls instead of being staggered by persecutions, grew the stronger by it. The Superior, and the master of the novices of the house in which this good brother was, declared against me, without knowing me ; and were grievously chagrined that a WOMAN, as they said, should be so much flocked to, and so much sought after. For looking at the things as they were in themselves, and not as they were in God, who does whatever pleases him, they had nothing

thing but contempt for the gift which was lodged in so mean an instrument, instead of esteeming God and his grace, attending to the meanness of the subject in which he sheds it. Yet this good brother at length got the superior to come to see me, and thank me for the charities which he said I had done them: Our LORD so ordered, that he found something in my conversation which reached and took hold of him. At length he was completely gained and brought over. And he it was, who some time after, being visiter, dispersed such a number of those books, bought at their own charge, which the others had tried utterly to destroy. Oh how wonderful art thou, my God! In all thy ways how wise, in all thy conduct how full of love! How well thou canst frustrate all the false wisdom of men, and triumph over their vain precautions!

THERE were in this noviciate many novices. The eldest of them grew so very uneasy under his vocation, that he knew not what to do. So great was his trouble that he could neither read, study, pray, nor do scarce any of his duties. His companion brought him to me. We spoke a while together, and the LORD discovered to me both the cause of his disorder and its remedy. I told it to him; and he began to practise prayer, even that of the heart. He was on a sudden wonderfully changed, and the LORD highly favoured him. As I spoke to him grace wrought in his heart, and his soul drank it in, as the parched ground does the gentle rain. He felt himself quit of his pain before he left the room. He then readily, joyfully, and perfectly performed all his exercises, which before were done with reluctance and disgust. He now both studied and prayed easily,
and

and discharged all his duties, in such a manner, that he was scarce known to himself or others. What astonished him most was a sprout of life which remained with him, and a gift of prayer. He saw that there was readily given him what he could never have before, whatever pains he took for it: And this enlivening sprout was the principle which made him act, gave him grace for his employments, and an inward fruition of the grace of God, which brought all good with it. He gradually brought me all the novices, all of whom partook of the effects of grace, though differently, according to their different degrees. Never was there a more flourishing noviciate.

THE Master and Superior could not forbear admiring so great a change in their novices, though they did not penetrate the cause of it. One day, as they were speaking of it to the Collector, for they esteemed him highly on account of his merit and virtue, and telling him, they were surprized at the change in the novices, and the blessing the LORD had bestowed on the noviciate, he said to them, "My fathers, if you will permit me, I will tell you the reason of it. It is the lady against whom ye have exclaimed so much without knowing her, whom God has made use of for all this." They were very much surprized; and both the master, though advanced in age, and his superior then submitted humbly to practice prayer, after the manner taught by a little book,* which the LORD inspired me to write, and of which I shall say more hereafter: And they reaped such benefit from it, that the superior said to me, "I am become quite a
" new

* The short method of Prayer.

“ new man. I could not practise prayer before,
 “ because my reasoning faculty was grown dull
 “ and exhausted ; but now I do it as often as I
 “ will, with ease, with much fruit, and a quite
 “ different sensation of the presence of God :”
 And the master said, “ I have been a *Religious*,
 “ or friar, these forty years, and can truly say
 “ that I never knew how to pray, nor have I
 “ ever known or tasted of God, as I have done
 “ since I read that little book.”

MANY others were gained to God, besides those whom I looked on to be my true children, and who cost me the pangs of their birth. For the others I felt not that maternity, and that intimate efflux of grace I have spoken of, though they were won to the LORD by my means. He gave me a very great number of children, and three famous friars, of an order by which I have been, and still am, very much persecuted. He made me also of service to a great number of Nuns, of virtuous young women, and even men of the world ; among the rest a young man of quality, who had quitted the order of the knights of *Malta*, to take that of the priesthood. He was the relation of a bishop near him, who had other designs of preferment for him : He has been much favoured of the LORD, and is constant in prayer. I could not describe the great number of souls which were then given me, as well maids as wives, priests and friars. But there were three curates, one canon, and one grand-vicar, who were more particularly given me. There was one priest very intimately given me, for whom I suffered much, through his not being willing to die to himself, and loving himself too much ; with a sad regret I saw him decaying, falling away till
 he

was quite snatched from me. As for the others there are some of them who have continued steadfast and immoveable, some whom the tempest has shaken a little, but not torn away. Though these start aside, yet they still return. But those who are snatched quite away return no more.

THERE was one true daughter given me, whom our LORD made use of to gain many others to him. She was in a strange state of death when I first saw her, and by me he gave her life and peace. She afterwards fell extremely ill. The doctors said she would die; but I had an assurance of the contrary, and that God would make use of her, (as he has done) to gain souls. There was in a monastery a young woman confined in a state of distraction. I saw her, I knew her case, and that it was not what they thought of it. As soon as I had spoken to her she recovered: But the prioress did not like that I should tell her my thoughts of it, because the person who had brought her thither was her friend. They plagued her more than before, and threw her back again into her distraction.

A SISTER of another monastery was for eight years past in a deep melancholy, unrelieved by any one; for her director increased it, by practising remedies contrary to her disorder. I had never been in that monastery; for I did not go into such places, unless I was sent for, as I did not think it right to intrude, but left by myself to be conducted of Providence. I was very much surprized that at eight o'clock at night one came for me from the prioress. It was in the long days of summer, and being near it I went. I met with a sister who told me her case; she had gone
to

to such excess, that seeing no remedy for it, she had taken a knife to kill herself; but the knife fell out of her hand; and a person coming to see her had advised her to speak to me. Our LORD made me know at first what the matter was; and that he required her to resign herself to him, instead of resisting him as they had made her do for eight years. I was instrumental to draw her into such a resignation, that she entered at once into a peace of paradise; all her pains and troubles were instantly banished; and never returned since. She has the greatest capacity of any in the house. She was presently so changed as to be the admiration of the whole community. Our LORD gave her a very great gift of prayer and his continual presence, with a faculty and readiness for every thing. She was given me for a daughter; and also a domestic sister, who had troubled her for twenty-two years past, was delivered from her troubles, and is become a very religious woman. That produced a close tie of friendship between the prioress and me, as the wonderful change and the peace of this sister surprised her, she having so often seen her in her terrible pains. I also contracted other such ties in this monastery, where there are souls under the LORD's special regard, whom he drew to himself by the means he had been pleased to make choice of.

C H A P. XXI.

I WAS moved to read the holy scripture. It had been some time since I had read at all, not finding in myself any void to be filled. When I began I was impelled to write the passage, and instantly upon it, its explication was given me, which

which I also wrote, going on with inconceivable expedition, light being poured in upon me in such a manner, that I found I had in myself latent treasures of wisdom and knowledge which I had not yet known of. Before I wrote I knew not what I was going to write. And after I had written, I remembered nothing of what I had penned; nor could I make use of any part of it for the help of souls; but the LORD gave me, at the time I spoke to them, without any study or reflection of mine, all that was necessary for them. Thus the LORD made me go on with an explanation of the holy internal sense of the scriptures.* I had no other book but the Bible, nor ever made use of any but that, and without even seeking for any thing. When in writing on the Old Testament I made use of passages of the New, to support what I had said, it was without seeking them, they were given me along with the explication; and in writing on the New Testament, and therein making use of passages of the Old, they were given me in like manner without my seeking any thing. I had scarce any time for writing but in the night, allowing only one or two hours to sleep. The LORD made me write with so much purity, that I was obliged to leave off or begin again, as he was pleased to order. He proved me every way herein. When I writ by day, often suddenly interrupted, I left the word unfinished, and he afterwards gave me what he pleased. What I wrote was not in my head: That part was kept free and disengaged. If I gave any way to reflection I was punished for it, and could not proceed. And yet sometimes I
was

* All her explications have been published; those on the Old Testament in twelve small octavo volumes, and on the New Testament in eight.

was not duly attentive to the divine spirit, thinking I did well to continue when I had time, even without feeling his immediate impulse or enlightening influence, from whence it is easy to see some places clear and consistent, and others which have neither taste nor unction; such is the difference of the spirit of God from the human and natural spirit, tho' they are left just as I wrote them, yet I am ready, if ordered, to adjust them according to my present light. Didst thou not, Oh my God, turn me a hundred ways, to prove whether I was without any reserve, through every kind of trial or whether I had not yet some little interest for myself? My soul became hereby readily pliable to every discovery of the divine will, and whatever kind of humiliations attended me to counterbalance my LORD's favours, till every thing, high or low, was rendered alike to me.

METHINKS the LORD acts with his dearest friends as the sea with its waves. Sometimes it pushes them against the rocks where they break in pieces, sometimes it rolls them on the sand, or dashes them on the mire, then instantly it retakes them into the depths of its own Bosom, where they are absorpt with the same rapidity that they were first ejected. Even among the good the far greater part are souls only of *Mercy*; and surely that is well: But to appertain to divine *Justice*, oh how rare and yet how great! *Mercy* is all distributive in favour of the creature, but *Justice* destroys every thing of the creature, without sparing any thing. It can demand nothing but for itself; yet they must be voluntary victims, as have no other object but itself in what they suffer.

THE lady, who was my particular friend, began to conceive some jealousy on the applause
X x given

given me, GOD so permitting it for the farther purification of her soul, through this weakness, and the pain it caused her. Also some confessors began to be uneasy, saying, "It was none of my business to invade their province, and to meddle in the help of souls; and that there were some of the penitents which had an entire openness for me." It was easy for me to observe the difference betwixt those confessors who, in their conducting of souls, seek nothing but GOD, and those who seek themselves therein; for the first came to see me, and rejoiced greatly at the grace of GOD bestowed on their penitents, without fixing their attention on the instrument: The others, on the contrary, tried underhand to stir up the town against me. I saw that they would be in the right to oppose me, if I had intruded of myself; but I could do nothing but what the LORD made me do. At times there came some to dispute and oppose me. Two friars came one of them a man of profound learning and a great preacher. They came separately, after having studied for a number of difficult things to propose to me. But though they were matters far out of my reach, the LORD made me answer as justly as if I had studied them all my life; after which I spoke to them as he inspired me. They went away not only convinced and satisfied, but even affected with the love of GOD.

I STILL continued writing with a prodigious swiftness; for the hand could scarce follow fast enough the spirit which dictated, and through the whole progress of so long a work I never altered my manner nor made use of any other book than the bible itself. The transcriber, whatever diligence he used, could not copy in five days what I wrote

I wrote in one night. Whatever is good in it comes from God only. Whatever is otherwise from myself; I mean from the mixture which I have made, without duly attending to it, of my own impurity with his pure and chaste doctrine. In the day I had scarce time to eat, by reason of the vast numbers of people which came thronging to me. I wrote the canticles in a day and a half, and received several visits besides.

HERE I may add to what I have said about my writings, that a considerable part of the book of *Judges* happened by some means to be lost. Being desired to render that book complete, I wrote over again the places lost. Afterwards when the people were about leaving the house, they were found. My former and latter explications, on comparison, were found to be perfectly conformable to each other, which greatly surprized persons of knowledge and merit, who attested the truth of it.

THERE came to see me a counsellor of the parliament, a servant of God, who finding on my table * *a tract on Prayer*, which I had wrote long before, desired me to lend it. Having read it and liked it much, he lent it to some friends, to whom he thought it might be of service. Every one wanted copies of it. He resolved therefore to have it printed. The impression was begun, and proper approbations given to it. They requested me to write a preface, which I did, and thus was that little book printed, which has since made so much noise, and been the pretence for the

* This was *le Moyen court*, of which an entire new translation is to be given at the end of the third part.

the several persecutions. This counsellor was one of my intimate friends, and a pattern of piety. The book has already passed through five or six editions ; and our LORD has given a very great benediction to it. Those good friars took fifteen hundred of them. The devil became so enraged against me on account of the conquest which God made by me, that I was assured he was going to stir up against me a violent persecution. All that gave me no trouble. Let him stir up against me ever so strange persecutions : I know they will all serve to the glory of my God.

CHAP. XXII.

A POOR girl of very great simplicity, who earned her livelihood by her labour, and was inwardly favoured of the LORD, came all sorrowful to me, and said, " Oh my mother, what strange things have I seen ! " I asked what they were, " Alas said she, I have seen you like a lamb " in the midst of a vast troop of furious wolves. " I have seen a frightful multitude of people of all " ranks and robes, of all ages, sexes and conditions, priests, friars, married men, maids and " wives, with pikes, halberts and drawn swords, " all eager for your instant destruction. You let " them alone without stirring, or being surprized " and without offering any way to defend yourself. I looked on all sides to see whether any " one would come to assist and defend you ; " but I saw not one." Some days after, those, who through envy were raising private batteries against me, broke forth. Libels began to spread. Envious people wrote against me, without knowing me. They said, " I was a sorceress, that it " was

“ was by a magic power I attracted souls, that
 “ every thing in me was diabolical ; that if I did
 “ some charities, it was because I coined, and
 “ put off false money,” with many other gross
 accusations, equally false, groundless and absurd.

As the tempest increased every day, some of
 my friends advised me to withdraw, but before
 I mention my leaving *Grenoble*, I must say some-
 thing farther of my state while here.

JESUS CHRIST was communicated to me in
 all his states. His apostolic state was at that time
 set most before me. When I could neither write
 nor impart the overflowing of my soul any other
 way, I was all languishing. I experienced what
 our LORD said to his disciples, “ *With desire I*
“ have desired to eat this passover with you.” Luke
 xxii. 15. It was the communion of himself by
 that supper, and by his passion, when he said,
 “ It is finished.” John xix. 30. *And bowing*
his head he gave up the ghost, returning his spirit
 as well as his kingdom to his Father ; as if he had
 then said, “ My Father, my kingdom is that I
 “ reign by thee, and thou by me, over men ;
 “ which can only be done by the shedding abroad
 “ of my spirit upon them : Let then my spirit be
 “ communicated to them by my death.” In
 this is the finishing and consummation of all
 things. Often the plenitude of this spirit took
 from me the liberty of writing. I had nothing
 for myself ; all was for others ; and yet I want-
 ed nothing. I was like those nurses who are full
 of milk, though they are not themselves fed there-
 by.

BEFORE I began to write in the book of Kings
 on what regards David, I felt so close an union
 with

with that holy patriarch, that I communicated with him, as if he had been present. I comprehended the greatness of his grace, the conduct of God over him, and all the circumstances of the states through which he had passed; that he was a lively figure of JESUS CHRIST, and a chosen pastor for *Israel*. It seemed to me that all our LORD made, and would make me do for souls, would be in union with David, my dear King, and with those for whom there was given me at the same time an union like that which I had with him, but still most of all with JESUS CHRIST, sprung from the seed of David. In this divine union my words had wonderful effect, even the formation of JESUS CHRIST in the souls of others. I was in no wise mistress of saying the things I did. He who conducted me made me say what he pleased, and as long as he pleased. To some I was not permitted to speak a word; and to others there flowed forth as it were a deluge of grace, and yet this pure love admitted not of any superfluity, or matter of empty amusement. When questions were asked, to which an answer were useless, it was not given me. It was the same case in regard to such as our LORD was pleased to conduct through death to themselves, and who came to seek for human consolation. I had nothing for them but what was purely necessary, and could proceed no farther. I could at least only speak of indifferent things, in such liberty as God allows, in order to suit every one, and not be unsociable or disagreeable to one's neighbour; but for his own word, he himself is the dispenser of it. Oh if preachers were duly careful to speak only in that spirit, what fruits would they bring forth in the lives of their hearers: With my true children I could communicate best in silence, in
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the spiritual language of the divine word. I had the consolation some time before to hear one read in St. AUGUSTINE a conversation he had with his mother. He complains of the necessity of returning from that heavenly language to words, by reason of our weakness. I sometimes said, "Oh my love, give me hearts large enough to receive and contain the fulness bestowed on me." I had wonderful intelligences opened to me, of the communication at the supper betwixt JESUS CHRIST and St. John, and continued betwixt St. John and the mother of our LORD; how the holy child communicated himself to the Eastern sages, and to the shepherds, conveying to them the knowledge of his divinity.

AFTER this manner when the Holy Virgin approached ELIZABETH, a wonderful commerce was maintained betwixt JESUS CHRIST and St. JOHN the Baptist, who after this manifested no eagerness to come to see CHRIST, but was drawn to retire into the desert, to receive the like communications with the greatest plenitude. When he came forth to preach repentance, he said, not that he was the WORD, but only a VOICE which was sent to make way, or open a passage into the hearts of the people for CHRIST the WORD. He baptised only with water, for that was his function; for as the water in running off leaves nothing, so does the VOICE when 'tis past. But the WORD baptised with the Holy Ghost, because he imprinted himself on souls, and communicated with them by that Holy Spirit. It is not observed that JESUS CHRIST said any thing during the whole obscure part of his life, though it is true that not any of his words shall be lost. Oh Love, if all thou hast said and operated in silence were to be written

written, I think *the whole world could not contain the books that should be written.* JOHN xxi. 25.

ALL that I experienced was shewn me in the Holy Scripture ; and I saw with admiration that there passed nothing within my soul which was not in JESUS CHRIST and in the Holy Scripture. I must pass over very many things in silence, because they cannot be expressed ; and if they were expressed could not be understood or comprehended.

I OFTEN felt much for Father *La Combe*, who was not yet fixed in his state of interior death, but often rose and fell into alternatives. I was made sensible that he was a vessel of election, whom GOD had chosen to carry his name among the *Gentiles*, and that he would shew him how much he must suffer for that name. Oh GOD ! who can ever be able to comprehend the pure and holy union which thou formest betwixt thy children ? A carnal world judges carnally of them, and imputes to human attachment what is from the purest grace. If this union by any deviation be broken, the more pure and perfect it is, the more painfully will it be felt ; the separation of the soul from GOD by sin being worse than that from the body by death. For myself I may say I had a continual dependance on GOD, in every state ; my soul was ever willing to obey every motion of his spirit. I thought there could not be any thing in the world which he should require from me, to which I would not give myself up readily and with pleasure. I had no interest at all for myself. When GOD requires any thing from this wretched nothing, I find no resistance left in me to do his will, how rigorous soever it may appear.

appear. Oh my Love, if there is a heart in the world of which thou art the sole and absolute master, mine seems to be one of that sort. Thy will, however rigorous, is its life and its pleasure; for it no more subsists but in thee alone.—I have wandered; which is usual with me, occasioned by interruptions, as well as by two grievous indispositions, which I have had since I began to write, as also by resigning myself to the matter which carries my mind forward.

C H A P. XXIII.

TO resume the thread of my story, the Bishop of *Grenoble's* Almoner persuaded me to go for some time to *Marseilles*, to let the storm pass over; telling me that I should be well received there, it being his native soil, and many people of merit there. I wrote to Father *La Combe* for his consent hereto. He readily gave it. I might have gone to *Verceil*; for the Bishop of *Verceil* had wrote me very obliging letters, earnestly pressing me to come thither: But a human respect, and fear of affording a handle to my enemies, gave me an extreme aversion thereto. When I make use of the term *enemies*, I must explain myself. It is not that I account any mortal to be in reality my enemy; viewing those whom God makes use of, no otherwise than as instruments of his justice.

BESIDE the above, the Marchioness of *Prunai*, who, since my departure from her, had been more enlightened by her own experience, having met with a part of the things which I thought would befall her, had conceived for me a very strong
Y y friendship

friendship and intimate union of spirit, in such a manner that no two sisters could be more united than we were. She was extremely desirous that I would return to her, as I had formerly promised her. But I could not resolve upon this, for fear lest it should be thought that I was gone after Father *La Combe*. But, oh my God, how was this relick of *self-love* overturned by the secret ways of thy adorable Providence! I had yet that exterior support of having it in my power to say, that I had never gone after him. There had been no room given to any body to accuse me of any indirect attachment to him; for when it depended on myself not to continue with him, I did not do it. The Bishop of *Geneva* had not failed to write against me to *Grenoble*; as he had done to other places. His nephew had gone from house to house to cry me down. All this was indifferent to me; and I did not cease to do to his diocese all the good in my power. I even wrote to him in a respectful manner; but his heart was too much closed to yield to such things.

BEFORE I went off from *Grenoble*, that good girl I have spoken of came to me weeping, and told me, "I was going, and that I hid it from her, because I would have nobody know it; but that the devil would be before me in all the places I should go to; that I was going to a town, where I should scarce be arrived, but he would stir up that whole town against me, and would do me all the harm he possibly could." What had obliged me to conceal my departure, was my fear of being loaded with visits, and testimonies of friendship from a number of good persons, who had a very great affection for me.

I EMBARKED

I EMBARKED then upon the *Rhone*, with my chamber-maid and a young woman of *Grenoble*, whom the LORD had highly favoured through my means. The Bishop of *Grenoble*'s Almoner also accompanied me, with another very worthy Ecclesiastic. We met with many alarming accidents and wonderful preservations; but those instant dangers, which affrighted others, far from alarming me, augmented my peace. The Bishop of *Grenoble*'s Almoner was much astonished. He was in a desperate fright, when the boat struck against the rock, and opened at the stroke; and in his emotion looking attentively at me, he observed that I did not change my countenance, or move my eye-brows, retaining all my tranquillity. I did not so much as feel the first emotions of surprize, which are natural to every body on those occasions, as they depend not on ourselves. What caused my peace in such dangers as terrify others at once, was my resignation to GOD, and because death is much more agreeable to me than life, if such were his will, to which I desire to be ever patiently submissive.

As I was going off from *Grenoble*, a man of quality, a great servant of GOD, and one of my intimate friends, had given me a letter for a knight of *Malta*, who was very devout, and whom I have esteemed since I have known him, as a man whom our LORD designed to serve the order of *Malta* greatly, and to be its ornament and support by his holy life. I had told him that I thought he should go thither, and that GOD would assuredly make use of him to diffuse a spirit of piety into many of the knights. He is actually gone to *Malta*, where the first places were soon given him. This man of quality sent him the little book of prayer written by me, and printed at *Grenoble*.

noble. He had a chaplain, very sweet to the spiritual path. He took this book, and condemned it at once, went to stir up a part of the town, and amongst the rest a set of men who call themselves the seventy-two disciples of St. Cyprian. I arrived at *Marseilles* at ten o'clock in the morning, and that very afternoon all was in a noise against me. Some went to speak to the Bishop, telling him that, on account of that little book, it was necessary to banish me from that city. They gave him the book, which he examined with one of his prebends. He liked it well. He sent for Monsieur MALAVAL and a father Recollect, who he knew had come to see me a little after my arrival, to enquire of them from whence that great tumult had its rise, which indeed had no other effect on me than to make me smile, seeing so soon accomplished what that young woman had foretold me. Monsieur MALAVAL and that good *Religious* told the Bishop what they thought of me; after which he testified much uneasiness at the insult given me. I was obliged to go to see him. He received me with extraordinary respect, and begged my excuse for what had happened, desired me to stay at *Marseilles*, and assured me that he would protect me. He even asked where I lodged, that he might come to see me.

NEXT day the Bishop of *Gr  noble's* Almoner went to see him, with that other priest who had come with us. The Bishop of *Marseilles* again testified to them his sorrow for the insults given me without any cause; and told them, that it was usual with those persons to insult all such as were not of their cabal, that they had even insulted himself.

* Chief of the *Jansenists* in France.

self. They were not content with that. They wrote to me the most offensive letters possible, though at the same time they did not know me. I apprehended that our LORD was beginning in earnest to take from me every place of abode; and those words were renewed in my mind, "The foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head."

IN the short time of my stay at *Marseilles*, I was instrumental to support some good souls, and amongst others an Ecclesiastic, who till then was unacquainted with me. After having finished his thanksgiving in the church, seeing me go out, he followed me into the house in which I lodged: Then he told me, "the LORD had inspired him to address me, and to open his inward state to me." He did it with as much simplicity as humility, and the LORD gave him through me all that was necessary for him, from whence he was filled with joy, and thankful acknowledgments to GOD: For though there were many spiritual persons there, and even of his intimate friends, he never had been moved to open himself to any of them. He was a servant of GOD, favoured by him with a singular gift of prayer. During the eight days I was at *Marseilles*, I saw many good souls there; for, through all my persecutions, our LORD always struck some good stroke of his own right hand, and that good Ecclesiastic was delivered from an anxiety of mind, which had much afflicted him for some years past.

AFTER I had left *Grenoble*, those who hated me, without knowing me, spread libels against me. A woman for whom I had a great love, and whom

whom I had even extricated from an engagement which she had continued in for several years, and contributed to her discarding the person to whom she had been attached, suffering her mind to resume its fondness for that pernicious engagement, became so violently enraged against me for having broke it off; though I had freely been at some expence to procure her freedom from it, that she went to the Bishop of *Grenoble*, to tell him that I had counselled her to do an act of injustice. She then went from confessor to confessor repeating the same story, to animate them against me. As they were too susceptible of the prejudices infused, the fire was soon kindled in all quarters. There were none but those who knew me, and who loved God, that took my part. They became more closely united to me in sympathy through my persecution. It had been very easy for me to destroy the calumny, as well with the Bishop of *Grenoble* as in town. I had only to tell who the person was, and to shew the fruits of her disorder: but as I could not declare the guilty person, without making known at the same time the other who had been her accomplice, who now, being touched of God, was very penitent, I thought it best for me to suffer and be silent. There was a very pious man who knew all her history, from the beginning to the end of it, who wrote to her, that if she did not retract her lies, he would publish the account of her wicked life, to make known both her gross iniquity and my innocence. She continued some time in her malice, writing that I was a sorceress, with many other falshoods. Nevertheless, some time after she had such a cruel remorse of conscience on this account, that she wrote both to the Bishop and others to retract what she had said. She got one to write to me, to inform me that she was
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in despair for what she had done ; that God had punished her in such a manner, that she had never felt any thing like it. After these recantations the outcry abated, the Bishop was disabused, and since that time he has testified a great regard for me. This creature had, among other things, said that I made myself be worshipped ; and other unparalleled fooleries. As she had formerly been beside herself, I think in what she did to me there was more of weakness than of malice.

FROM *Marseilles* I knew not how or whither I should turn next. I saw no likelihood either of staying or returning to *Grenoble*, where I had left my daughter in a convent. On the other side Father *La Combe* had wrote to me that he did not think I ought to go to *Paris*. I even felt a strong reluctance to the view of going thither, which made me think it was not yet the time for it. One morning I felt myself inwardly pressed to go off, I took a litter to go to see the Marchioness of *Prunai*, which was, I thought, the most honourable refuge for me in my present condition. I imagined I might have passed through *Nice* to her habitation, as some had assured me I might. But when I arrived at *Nice*, I was greatly surprized to learn that the litter could not pass the mountain to go thither. I knew not what to do, nor which way to turn, being here alone, forsaken of every body, and not knowing what God required of me. My confusion and crosses seemed daily to increase. I saw myself, without refuge or retreat, wandering as a vagabond. All the tradesmen, whom I saw in their shops, appeared to me happy, in having a dwelling place of their own to retire to. Nothing in the world seemed harder than this wandering life to me, who naturally loved honour and decorum.

corum As I was in this uncertainty, not knowing what course to take, one came to tell me that next day a shallop would set off, which used to go in one day to *Genoa*; and that if I chose it, they would land me at *Savona*, from whence I might get myself carried to the Marchioness of *Prunai*'s house. To that I consented, as I could not be supplied with any other way of getting thither.

I HAD some joy at embarking on the sea. I said in myself, "If I am the dregs of the earth, the scorn and offscouring of nature, I am now going to embark on the element which above all others is the most treacherous; if it be the LORD's pleasure to plunge me in the waves, it shall be mine to perish in them." There came a tempest in a place pretty dangerous for a small boat; and the mariners were some of the wickedest. The irritation of the waves gave a satisfaction to my mind. I pleased myself in thinking that those mutinous billows might probably supply me with a grave. Perhaps I carried the point too far in the pleasure I took, at seeing myself beaten and bandied by the swelling waters. Those who were with me, took notice of my intrepidity, but knew not the cause of it. I asked of thee, my Love, some little hole of a rock to be placed in, there to live separate from all creatures. I figured to myself, that some uninhabited island would have terminated all my disgraces, and put me in a condition of infallibly doing thy will. But, oh my divine Love, thou designed me a prison far different from that of the rock, and quite another banishment than that of the uninhabited island. Thou reserved me to be battered by billows, more irritated than those of the sea. Calumnies proved the outrageous unrelenting waves, to which I was
to

to be exposed, in order to be lashed and tossed by them without mercy. By the tempest swelling against us we were kept back, and instead of a short day's passage to *Genoa*, we were eleven days in making it. How peaceable was my heart in so violent an agitation! The swelling of the sea, and the fury of its waves were as I thought, only a figure of that swelling fury which all the creatures had against me. I said to thee, oh my Love, "Arm them all to avenge thyself on me for my infidelities, and for those of all the creatures." I saw thy right hand armed against me; and I loved more than my life the strokes it gave me. We could not land at *Savona*. We were obliged to go on to *Genoa*. We arrived there in the beginning of the week before Easter.

WHILE I was there I was obliged to bear the insults of the inhabitants, caused by the resentment they had against the French, for the havock of a late bombardment. The Doge was newly gone out of the city, and had carried off with him all the litters. Wherefore I could not get one, and was obliged to stay several days at excessive expences; for the people there demanded of us exorbitant sums, and as much for every single person as they would have asked for a company at the best eating-house in *Paris*. I had little money left, but my store in Providence could not be exhausted. I begged with the greatest earnestness for a litter at any price, to pass the feast of Easter at the Marchioness of *Prunai's* house. It was then within three days of Easter; and I could scarce any way get myself to be understood. By the force of intreaty, they brought me at length a sorry litter with lame mules, and told me that they would take me readily

dily to *Verceil*, which was only two days journey, but demanded an enormous sum for it; they would not engage to take me to the Marchioness of *Prunai's* house, as they knew not where her estate lay. This was to me a strong mortification; for I was very unwilling to go to *Verceil*; nevertheless the proximity of Easter, and want of money, in a country where they used every kind of extortion and tyranny, left me no choice. I was under an absolute necessity of submitting to be thus conveyed to *Verceil*.

THUS Providence *led me whither I would not*. Our muleteer was one of the most brutal men to be met with; and for an increase of my affliction, I had sent away to *Verceil* the ecclesiastic who accompanied us, to prevent their surprize at seeing me there, after I had protested against going thither. That ecclesiastic was very coarsely treated on the road, through the hatred they bore to the French; and they made him go part of the way on foot, so that, though he set off the day before me, he arrived there only a few hours sooner than I did. And as for the fellow who conducted us, seeing he had only women under his care, he used us in the most insolent and bearish manner.

WE passed through a wood infested with robbers. The muleteer was afraid, and told us, "that, if we met any of them on the road, we should be murdered; for they spared nobody." Scarce had he uttered these words, when there appeared four men well armed. They immediately stopped the litter. The man was exceedingly frightened. I made a light bow of my head, with a snile, for I had no fear, and was so entirely

tirely resigned to providence, that it was all one to die this way or any other ; in the sea, or by the hands of robbers. But oh my God, how wonderful at this, as at many other times, was thy protection over me ! How many perils have I passed through upon mountains, and on the very edges of tremendous steep rocks ! How often hast thou checked the foot of the mule already slipping over the precipice ! How often have I been like to be thrown headlong from those frightful heights, into hideous torrents which, though rolling in chasms far below our shrinking sight, forced us to hear them by their horrible noise. When the dangers were most manifest, then was my faith the strongest, as well as my intrepidity, being unable to wish for any thing else than what should fall out, whether to be dashed against the rocks, drowned, or killed any other way ; every thing in the will of God being equal to me. The people who used to convey or attend me said, “ they had never seen a courage like mine ; ” for the most alarming dangers, and the time when death appeared the most certain, were those which seemed to please me the most. Was it not thy pleasure, oh my God, which guarded me in every imminent danger, and held me back from rolling down the precipice, on the instant of sliding over its dizzy brow ? The more easy I was about life, which I bore only because thou wast pleased to bear it, the more care thou tookest to preserve it. There seemed a mutual emulation betwixt us, on my part to resign it, and on thine to maintain it. The robbers then advanced to the litter ; but I had no sooner saluted them, than God made them change their design. Having pushed off one another, as it were to hinder each of them from doing any harm ; they re-
spectfully

spectfully saluted me, and, with an air of compassion, unusual to such sorts of persons, retired. I was immediately struck to the heart, oh my Love, with a full and clear conviction that it was a stroke of thy right hand, who had other designs over me than to suffer me to die by the hand of robbers. It is thy sovereign power which takes away their all from thy devoted lovers ; and destroys their lives with all that is of *self* without pity or sparing any thing.

THE muleteer, seeing me attended only with two young women, thought he might treat me as he would, perhaps expecting to draw money from me. Instead of taking me to the inn, he brought me to a mill, in which there was not one woman. There was but one single chamber with several beds in it, in which the millers and muleteers lay together. In that chamber they forced me to stay. I told the muleteer I was not a person to lie in such a place as he had brought me to ; and wanted to oblige him to take me to the inn ; but nothing of it would he do. I was constrained to go out on foot, at ten o'clock at night, carrying a part of my clothes, and to go a good way more than a quarter of a league of that country, where the leagues are very long, in the dark, in a strange place, not knowing the way, crossing one end of the wood infested with robbers, to endeavour to get to the inn. That fellow, seeing us go off from the place where he had wanted to make me lodge, with a bad design hooted after us in a very abusive manner. I bore my humiliation chearfully, not without feeling it. But the will of God and my resignation to it rendered every thing easy to me. We were well received at the inn ; And the good people there did the best
in

in their power for our recovery from the fatigue we had undergone. They assured us the place we had left was very dangerous. Next morning we were obliged to return on foot to the litter, for that man would not bring it to us. On the contrary he fell on us with a shower of fresh insults. And to consummate his base behaviour, he sold me to the post, whereby I was forced to go the rest of the way in a post-chaise instead of a litter.

In this equipage I arrived at *Alexandria* a frontier town, subject to *Spain*, on the side of the *Milanese*. Our driver took us, according to their custom, to the post-house, I was exceedingly astonished when I saw the landlady coming out not to receive him, but to oppose his entrance. She had heard there were women in the chaise, and taking us for a different sort of women from what we were, she protested against our coming in. On the other hand, the driver was determined to force his entrance in spite of her. Their dispute rose to such a height, that a great number of the officers of the garrison, with a vast mob, gathered at the noise, who were surprized at the odd humour of the woman in refusing to lodge us. With whatever earnestness I intreated the post to take us to some other house, he would not; so obstinately was he bent on carrying his point. He assured the landlady we were persons of honour and piety too; the marks whereof he had seen. At last, by force of pressing instances, he obliged her to come to see us. As soon as she had looked at us, she acted as the robbers had done: She relented at once and admitted us.

No sooner had I alighted from the chaise, than she said to us, " Go shut yourselves up in that
" chamber

‘ chamber hard by, and do not stir, that my son
 “ may not know you are here; for as soon as he
 “ knows it he will kill you.” She said it with so
 much force, as did also the servant maid, that,
 if death had not so many charms for me, I should
 have been ready to die with fear. The two poor
 girls with me were under frightful apprehensions.
 When any stirred, or came to open the door, they
 thought they were coming to cut their throats.
 In short they continued in a dreadful suspense,
 between life and death, till next day, when we
 learned that the young man had sworn to kill any
 woman who lodged at the house; because a few
 days before an event had fallen out, which had
 like to have ruined him; a woman of a bad life
 having there privately murdered a man in some
 esteem, that had cost the house a heavy fine:
 And he was afraid of any more such persons com-
 ing, and not without reason.

C H A P. XXIV.

AFTER such sorts of adventures, and others
 which it would be too long to recite, I ar-
 rived at *Verceil*. I went to the inn where I was
 very ill received. I sent for father *La Combe*,
 who I thought had been already apprised of my
 coming thither, by the Ecclesiastic whom I had
 sent before, and who would be of so much service
 to me. This Ecclesiastic was only a little while
 arrived. How much better on the road should
 I have fared, if I had had him with me! For in
 that country they look upon ladies, accompanied
 with Ecclesiasticks, with veneration, as persons of
 honour and piety. Father *La Combe* came in a
 strange fret at my arrival, God so permitting it:
 He

He could not hide it from me. He said that every one would think I was come after him, and that would injure his reputation, which I found in that country was very high. I had had no less pain to go thither. It was necessity only which had obliged me to submit to such a disagreeable task. The Father received me with coolness, and in such a manner as let me sufficiently see his sentiments, and indeed redoubled my pain. I asked him if he required me to return, adding, "that, if he did, I " would go off that moment, however oppressed " and spent, both with fatigues and fastings." He replied, " he did not know how the Bishop " of *Verceil* would take my arrival, after he had " given over all his expectations of it, after I had " so long, and so obstinately, refused the oblig- " ing offers he had made me; since which he no " longer expressed any desire to see me."

IT seemed to me then as if I were rejected from the face of the earth, without being able to find any refuge in it, and as if all creatures were combined to crush me. I passed that night without sleep, not knowing what course I should be obliged to take, being persecuted by my enemies, and a subject of disgrace to my friends.

WHEN it was known at the inn, that I was one of Father *La Combe's* acquaintance, they treated me with the greatest respect and kindness; for they esteemed him as a saint. The Father knew not how to tell the Bishop of my arrival, and I felt his pain more than my own. As soon as that Prelate knew that I was arrived, he sent his niece who took me in her coach, and carried me to her house; but things were only done out of ceremony; and the Bishop, not having seen me yet,
knew

knew not what to think of a journey so very unexpected, after I had thrice refused, though he sent expresses on purpose to desire me to come to him. He was out of humour with me. Nevertheless, as he was informed that my design was not to stay at *Vercil*, but to go to the Marchioness of *Prunai's* house, he gave orders for me to be well treated. He could not see me till EASTER SUNDAY was over, for he officiated all the eve and all that day. After it was all over, he came in a chaise to his niece's house to see me; and though he understood *French* hardly any better than I did *Italian*, he was very well satisfied with the conversation he had with me. He appeared to have as much favour for me as he had had of indifference before. The second visit gained him entirely.

HE conceived as strong a friendship for me as if I had been his sister: And his only pleasure, amidst his continual occupations, was to come and pass half an hour with me in speaking of GOD. He wrote to the Bishop of *Marseilles* to thank him for having protected me in the persecution there. He wrote to the Bishop of *Grenoble*; and he omitted nothing to manifest his affectionate regard for me. He now seemed to think alone of finding out means to detain me in his diocese. He would not hear of my going to see the Marchioness of *Prunai*. On the contrary he wrote to her to come and settle with me in his diocese. He sent Father *La Combe* to her, on purpose to exhort her to come; assuring her that he would unite us all to make a congregation. The Marchioness entered into it readily, and so did her daughter too. They would have come with Father *La Combe*, but that the Marchioness was sick. The
Bishop

Bishop was active and earnest in collecting and establishing a society of us, and found several pious persons and some very devout young ladies, who were all ready to come to join us: But it was not the will of God to fix me thus, but to crucify me yet more.

THE fatigue of travelling made me fall sick. That girl also whom I brought from *Grenoble* fell sick. Her relations who were a covetous set of people, took it in their heads that, if she should die in my service, I should get her to make a will in my favour. They were much mistaken: For far from desiring the property of others, I had given up my own. Her brother, full of this apprehension, came with all speed; and the first thing he spoke to her about, though he found her recovered, was to make a will. That made a great noise in *Vercel*; for he wanted her to return with him, but she refused. I advised her to do what her brother desired her. He contracted a friendship with some of the officers of the garrison, to whom he told ridiculous stories, as that I wanted to use his sister badly: He pretended she was a person of quality, while she was only of a low birth. They gave out what I was still afraid of, viz. *That I was come after Father La Combe*. They persecuted him even on my account. The Bishop was much troubled at it, but could not remedy it. The friendship he had for me increased every day; because, as he loved God, so he did all those whom he thought desired to love him. As he saw me so much indisposed, he came to see me with assiduity and charity, when at leisure from his occupations. He made me little presents of fruits and other things of that nature. His relations were jealous of it, saying, "I was come

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" to

“to ruin him, and to carry off his money into “*France*,” which was a thing the farthest from my thoughts. The Bishop patiently bore these affronts, hoping still to keep me in his diocese, when I should be recovered.

FATHER *La Combe* was his prebend and his confessor. He esteemed him highly. God made use of him to convert several of the officers and soldiers, who, from being men of scandalous lives, became patrons of piety. In that place every thing was mixed with crosses and souls gained to God. There were some of his Friars, who, after his example, were advancing toward perfection. Though I neither understood their language nor they mine, the LORD made us understand each other in what concerned his service. The Rector of the Jesuits took his time, when Father *La Combe* was gone out of town, to prove me, as he said. He had studied theological matters, which I did not understand. He propounded to me several questions. The LORD inspired me to answer him in such a manner, that he went away both surprized and satisfied. He could not forbear speaking of it.

THE *Bernabites* of *Paris*, or rather Father *De La Mothe* took it in head to try to draw Father *La Combe* from thence to go preach at *Paris*. He wrote to the father-general about it, saying, “They had no subject at *Paris* to support their house, that their church was deserted; that it was a pity to leave such a man as father *La Combe* in a place where he only corrupted his language; that it was necessary to make his fine talents appear at *Paris*, where he himself could not bear the burthen of the house, if they did not

“not give him an assistant of such qualifications and experience.” Who would not have thought all this to be sincere? The Bishop of *Vercell*, who was very much a friend to the father-general, having advice thereof, opposed it, and answered him, “that it would be doing him the greatest injury to take from him a man who was exceeding useful to him, and at the time that he had the greatest need of him.”

THE father-general of the *Bernabites* would not agree to the request of Father *De La Mothe*, for fear of offending the Bishop of *Vercell*, in removing from him a man who was so necessary to him in the present posture of affairs. As to me, my indisposition increased. The air, which is there extremely bad, caused me a continual cough, with frequent returns of fever, accompanied with defluxions on the lungs, which obliged me to have much blood taken from me. I grew so much worse that it was thought I could not get over it. The Bishop was much afflicted to see it, but, having consulted the physicians, they assured him that the air of the place was mortal to me, whereupon he said to me with many tears, “I had rather have you live, though distant from me, than see you die here.” He gave up his design of establishing his congregation, for my friend would not settle there without me; and the *Genoese* lady could not easily leave her own city, where she was respected. The *Genoese* besought her to set up there what the Bishop of *Vercell* had wanted her to set up near him. It was a congregation almost like that of *Madam de Miramion*. When the Bishop had first proposed this affair, however agreeable it appeared, I had a presentiment that it would not succeed, and that it was
not

not what our LORD required of me, though I submissively yielded to the good proposal, were it only to acknowledge the many special favours of this prelate, being assured that the LORD would know well how to prevent what he should now require of me. As this good prelate saw he must resign himself to let me go, he said to me, "You were willing to be in the diocese of *Geneva*, and there they persecuted and rejected you; and I, who would so gladly have you, cannot keep you." He wrote to Father *La Mothe* that I should go in the spring, as soon as the season would permit; that he was exceeding sorry to be obliged to let me go; that he had looked upon me in his diocese as an Angel," with other things, enough to have thrown me into confusion, if I could have attributed any thing to myself. Yet he still hoped to have kept Father *La Combe*, which probably might have been, had not the death of the father-general given it another turn, as I shall relate.

HERE it was that I wrote upon the *Apocalypse*, and that there was given me a greater certainty of all the persecutions of the most faithful servants of GOD, according to what I wrote thereof, in respect to future times. Here also I was strongly moved to write to Madam *De Ch—*, I did it with great simplicity; and what I wrote was like the first foundation of what the LORD required of her, having been pleased to make use of me to help to bring her into his ways, being one to whom I am much united, and by her to others.

C H A P. XXV.

THE Bishop of *Vercel's* friend, the father-general of the *Bernabites*, departed this life. As soon as he was dead, Father *La Mothe* wrote to the vicar general, who now held his place till another should be elected, renewing his request to have Father *La Combe* as an assistant. The father, hearing that I was obliged on account of my indisposition to return into *France*, sent an order to Father *La Combe* to return to *Paris*, and to accompany me in my journey thither, as his doing that would exempt their house at *Paris*, already poor, from the expences of so long a journey. On the receipt hereof Father *La Combe*, who did not penetrate the poison under this fair outside, consented thereto; knowing it was my custom to have some Ecclesiastic with me in travelling. Father *La Combe* went off twelve days before me, in order to transact some business, and to wait for me at the passage over the mountains, as the place where I had most need of an escort. I set off in Lent, the weather then being very fine. It was a sorrowful parting to the Prelate. I pitied him; he was so much affected both at losing Father *La Combe* and me. He caused me to be attended, at his own expence, as far as *Turin*, giving me a gentleman and one of his Ecclesiastics to accompany me.

As soon as the resolution was taken that Father *La Combe* should accompany me, Father *La Mothe* reported every where "that he had been obliged to do it, to make him return into *France*." He expatiated on the attachment I had for father *La Combe*, pretending to pity me for it. Upon this every one said, "that I ought to

“ to put myself under the direction of Father *La Mothe*.” In the mean time he deceitfully palliated the malignity of his heart, writing letters full of esteem to Father *La Combe*, and some to me of tenderness, “ desiring him to bring his
 “ dear sister, and to serve her in her infirmities,
 “ and in the hardships of so long a journey; that
 “ he should be sensibly obliged to him for his
 “ care,” with many other things of the like nature.

I COULD not resolve to depart without going to see my good friend, the Marchioness of *Prunai*, notwithstanding the difficulty of the roads. I caused myself to be carried thither, it being scarce possible to go otherwise on account of the mountains. She was extremely joyful at seeing me arrive. Nothing could be more cordial than what passed between us with abundance of mutual openness. It was then that she acknowledged that all I had told her had come to pass; and a good Ecclesiastic, who lives with her, told me the same. We made ointments and plaisters together, and I gave her the secret of my remedies. I encouraged her, and so did Father *La Combe*, to establish an hospital in that place; which was done while we were there. I contributed my mite to it, which has ever been blest to all the hospitals, which have been established in reliance on Providence.

I BELIEVE I had forgot to tell that the LORD had made use of me to establish one near *Grenoble*, which subsists without any other fund than the supplies of Providence. My enemies made use of that afterwards to slander me, saying, “ I had
 “ wasted my children’s substance in establishing
 “ hospitals;” though, far from spending any of their substance, I had even given them my own;
 and

and though those hospitals have been established only on the fund of divine providence, which is inexhaustible. But so it has been ordered for my good, that all our LORD has made me do to his glory has ever been turned into crosses to me. I have forgot to particularize a great number both of crosses and indispositions; they have been so many as to render the suppressing of some of them in a manner inevitable.

As soon as it was determined that I should come into *France*, the LORD made known to me, that it was to have greater crosses than I ever yet had. Father *La Combe* had the like sense. He encouraged me to resign myself to the divine will, and to become a victim offered freely to new sacrifices. He also wrote to me, "Will it not be a thing very
"glorious to GOD, if he should make us serve,
"in that great city, for a spectacle to angels and
"to men?" I set off then with a spirit of sacrifice, to offer myself up to new kinds of punishments. All along the road something within me repeated the very words of St. PAUL, "I go bound in the
"spirit unto *Jerusalem*, not knowing the things
"that shall befall me there, save that the Holy
"Ghost witnesseth, saying, that bonds and afflictions abide me: But none of these things
"move me; neither count I my life dear unto
"myself, so that I might finish my course with
"joy." Acts xx. 22, 23, 24. I could not forbear to testify it to my most intimate friends, who tried hard to prevail on me to stop, and not to proceed any further. They were all willing to contribute a share of what they had, for my settlement there, and to prevent my coming to *Paris*. But I found it my duty to hold on my way, and to sacrifice myself for him who first sacrificed himself for me.

At

AT *Chamberry* we saw Father *La Mothe*, who was going to the election of a Father-General. Though he affected an appearance of friendship, it was not difficult to discover that his thoughts were different from his words, and that he had conceived dark designs against us. I speak not of his intentions, but to obey the command given me to omit nothing. I shall necessarily be obliged often to speak of him. I could wish with all my heart it were in my power to suppress what I have to say of him. If what he has done respected only myself, I would willingly bury all; but I think I owe it to truth, and to the innocence of Father *La Combe*, so cruelly oppressed, and grievously crushed so long, by wicked calumnies, by an imprisonment of several years, which in all probability will last as long as life. Though Father *La Mothe* may appear heavily charged in what I say of him, I protest solemnly, and in the presence of God, that I pass over in silence many of his bad actions.

I SAW then his design very clearly. Father *La Combe* observed it well also. Some of my friends apprized us that Father *La Mothe* had evil schemes against us; but they little thought them to be so desperately atrocious as they turned out. They thought that he would discharge Father *La Combe* after he had made him preach, and would for that bring some troubles on him. As it had formerly been said to him, *that we should be united together*, so now at *Chamberry* it was inwardly declared to him, *that we should be separated*. Father *La Mothe* was at the chapter every day, repeating his desires to Father *La Combe* not to leave me, but to accompany me all the way to *Paris*. Father *La Combe* asked him leave to let

let me go alone to *Grenoble*, as he was desirous to go to see his flock at *Tonon*. He made a difficulty of granting him that; so much sincerity he affected.

I WENT off for *Grenoble*. On my arrival there I was seized with a fever which held me fifteen days. That good brother, the collector, hereby had exercise for his charity. He gave me remedies, making me only take viper broth in all my sauces, which, with the change of air, gradually removed the disorder. All those whom God had given me, the first time I was at *Grenoble*, came to visit me in my illness; and were filled with joy at seeing me again. They shewed me the letters and retractions of that poor passionate girl, and I did not see that any body retained an impression against me from her stories. The Bishop here manifested more kindness to me than ever, assuring me that he had never believed any thing of them, and made me an offer to stay in his diocese. They farther pressed me with new instances to induce me to stay at the general hospital. But it was not the place where God required me to be. Every thing announced the Cross to me. I was penetrated with the impression thereof continually.

THAT good girl of whom I have spoken, who had foreseen so many persecutions to befall me, had again many presentiments of the crosses which were about falling in a torrent upon us at *Paris*. She said, "What will ye go to do there, "to be crucified?" All along the road such souls as were spiritual, and of grace, spoke to us of nothing but crosses; and that impression that *bonds and afflictions awaited me*, was ever present.—I come then, oh my sovereign Love! to sacrifice
 B b b myself

myself to thy will. Thou knowest what crosses I have had to bear from my own relations, what an universal decry I am under: And yet, through all this persecution, thou dost not fail to gain souls to thyself in every place, and at every time; and I think myself overpaid for all my troubles and pains, were they only to procure the salvation and perfection of one soul.—It was in this place, oh God, that thou wast willing to erect a theatre of thy will and works by the cross, and the good to be done to souls thereby.

END OF THE SECOND PART.

THE LIFE
OF
LADY GUION,
PART III. CHAP. I.

* SCARCE had I arrived at *Paris*, when I readily discovered the black designs entertained

* Now we approach a combination of the wickedest plots, and most abominable lies, against LADY GUION, and Father *La Combe*, set on foot by Father *La Mothe*, her half brother, and his accomplices; amongst whom we find the official, or judge of the ecclesiastical court, and at length Monsieur *De Harlay*, Archbishop of *Paris*. It soon ended in the imprisonment of both these faithful martyrs, and dear servants of their great Creator. Her fundamental principle being *The pure disinterested love of God, formed in the soul by the operation of divine grace through submission, self-renunciation, fervent prayer, faithful obedience to its discoveries, and inward communion therewith.* The wicked Ecclesiastics hated such a principle or doctrine as tended to wean the people from a blind dependance on them, to teach men to pray to God for themselves, and to love him singly for his own sake, for his wisdom, goodness and perfections; clear from all views of selfish interest. Such Ecclesiastics would scruple nothing they could devise, to destroy the publisher of a free and evangelical doctrine.—As this part is by far the least instructive, containing little else than the minute account of her various examinations, persecutions and imprisonments, we have abridged it in some places, to leave the more opportunity for a specimen of her Hymns, and that precious Tract on Prayer, which was made the handle of all that violent outcry that was raised against her.

tained against both Father *La Combe* and me. Father *La Motte* who conducted the whole tragedy, artfully dissembled, according to his custom; flattering me to the face, while he was aiming the keenest wounds behind the back. He and his confederates wanted, for their own interest, to persuade me to go to *Montargis* (*my native place*) hoping thereby to get the guardianship of my children, and to dispose of both my person and effects. All the persecutions from Father *La Motte* and my family have been attended on their part with the views of interest; and those against Father *La Combe* have sprung from rage and revenge, because he, as my director, did not oblige me to do what they wanted; as well as out of jealousy. I might enter into a long detail on this head, sufficient to convince all the world hereof. But I suppress, to avoid prolixity. I shall only say that they threatened to deprive me of what little I had reserved to myself. To this I only replied "That I would not go to law, that if they were resolved to take from me the little I had left (*little indeed in comparison of what I had given up*) I would surrender it entirely to them;" being quite free and willing not only to be poor, but even in the very extremity of want in imitation of our LORD JESUS CHRIST.

I ARRIVED at *Paris* on *Magdalene's* eve, 1686, exactly five years after my departure from that city. After Father *La Combe* arrived there, he was soon followed and much applauded. I perceived some jealousy in Father *La Motte* hereupon, but did not think that matters would be carried so far as they have been. The greatest part of the *Bernabites* of *Paris*, and its neighbourhood, joining against Father *La Combe*, induced thereto

thereto from several causes that particularly related to their order. But all their calumnies and evil attempts were overthrown by the unaffected piety of Father *La Combe*, and the good which multitudes reaped from his labours.

I HAD deposited a little sum of money in the hands of F. *La Combe* (with the consent of his Superior) to serve for the entrance of a Nun. I thought myself obliged in conscience to do it; for she had, through my means, quitted the new catholicks. It was that young woman whom I mentioned before, (See Part II. chap. v.) whom the Priest of *Gex* wanted to win over. As she is beautiful, though very prudent, there always continues a cause for fear, when such an one is exposed without any establishment. *La Mothe* wanted to have that money, and signified to *La Combe* "that, if he did not make me give him it for a wall, which he had to rebuild in his convent, he would make him suffer for it." But the latter, who is always upright, answered, "that he could not in conscience advise me to do any thing else but what I had already resolved, in favour of that young woman." So now he and the provincial ardently longed to satisfy their desire of revenge. They employed all their thoughts on the means of effecting it.

FOR this purpose they sent to Father *La Combe*, to confess a man and a woman, who were united to commit every sort of crime with impunity, and to persecute the servants of God. I think there never was such another artifice. The man counterfeits all sorts of hands, and is fit for executing any vile design. They pretended to be very devout; and among so great a number of
souls,

souls, as came from all parts to Father *La Combe* to confess, he never discerned these diabolical spirits: GOD so permitting it, who had given power to the devil to treat him like JOB.

ONE evening before this, being alone in my chamber, retired in prayer, all on a sudden my state of childhood seemed to be taken from me, to make way for that of my being joined to JESUS CHRIST crucified. What passed in this new union of love to that divine object, himself alone knows. My state still became deeper, as I had borne JESUS CHRIST in his denudation and crosses, so now I seemed to bear him in crucifixion, which was the finishing of all his states. Nothing but experience can make any comprehend what I mean. These words at this time I felt impress. *And he was numbered with the transgressors.* MARK XV. 28. And it was put in my mind that I must bear JESUS CHRIST in this state in its whole extent. Oh my LORD if there has not yet been poured upon me enough of reproaches and ignominies, finish and consummate that state to me by the last punishment. Every thing will be well received as coming from thee. For me to suffer for thy name's sake was the contract of our sacred marriage: And thy handmaid acknowledges thy goodness to her, continued to this day, in sanctifying her sufferings to the honour of thy worthy name.

I RECEIVED a letter from Father *La Combe*, who wrote to me in these terms, "The time looks gloomy," (speaking of Father *La Mothe's* humour in regard to him) "I know not when the thunder will fall: But every thing shall be well come from the hand of GOD." In the mean time
the

the husband of that wicked creature, who counterfeited the saint, in order to play his game the better, left off going to confess to Father *La Combe*, but sent his wife, who said *she was very sorry that her husband had quitted that Father*; she told him, *that GOD had revealed to her things to come, and that he was going to meet with great persecutions.* It was easy for her to know it, since she was planning them with Father *La Mothe*, the Provincial and her husband.

DURING this time I went into the country to the house of the Duchess of C.* There I found several persons, whose interior progress the LORD made me instrumental to assist, and who were of the number of my spiritual children. I felt a strong impulse to communicate to them in silence: But as it was strange to some of them, admitting natural timidity, I failed in fidelity to what GOD required of me. They read a passage of scripture, which they interpreted in a manner quite contrary to the sense given me of it, which oppressed my spirit exceedingly; and the more so because I durst not speak, on account of certain persons present, who held me in a kind of bondage:

* IT is observable that through this part, after her return to *Paris*, she is very tender of setting down the names or surnames and titles of any of her friends. The writer of the Archbishop of *Cambray's* life acquaints us, that that Prelate first met with this Lady at the Duchess of *Bethune's* house. But she does not once make mention of that Duchess, nor of the house of *Charoste*. And though in the III^d Chapter of this part, she informs us that *the more persecution raged against her the more children were given her of the LORD*, yet she mentions the names of none of them, being unwilling thereby to occasion their being exposed to, and involved in, her sufferings.

age: But after dinner I had an opportunity to speak to some of them, which gave relief to my troubled mind. Often from the plenitude which filled my soul, I was favoured with a freedom to impart or communicate to my best disposed children to our mutual joy and comfort, not only when present, but often when absent. I even felt it to flow from me into their souls. When they wrote to me they informed me that at such times they had received abundant infusions of divine grace. Our LORD had given me that spirit of truth, which knows how to *refuse the evil, and chuse the good*. Even when any preached, or talked of pious subjects, I felt in myself that which rejected every thing of human conception or opinion, and accepted only that which was the pure truth.

FATHER *La Combe* wrote to me while I was in the country, that he had found an admirable woman (meaning *the counterfeit saint* I have mentioned above) and gave me some circumstances respecting her, which put me in fear for him. Nevertheless as the LORD gave me nothing particular thereupon, I writ to him that I resigned him to GOD for that, as for the rest.

THE husband of that woman, induced by the enemies of Father *La Combe*, wrote defamatory libels, to which they attached the propositions of *Molinos*, which had been current for two years past in *France*, declaring that they were the sentiments of Father *La Combe*. These libels were spread about in the communities in all parts. Father *La Mothe* and the Provincial, acting as persons well affected to the church, carried them to the Official, or judge of the Ecclesiastic court,
who

who joined in the dark design. They shewed them to the Archbishop, saying, "it was out of their zeal, and that they were exceeding sorry that one of their fraternity was an heretic, and as such execrable." They also brought me in, but more moderately, saying, "Father *La Combe* was almost always at my house," which was very false; for I could scarce see him but at the confessional, and that for very short spaces. Several other things equally false they liberally gave out of us both.

THEY bethought themselves of one thing further likely to favour their scheme. They knew I had been at *Marseilles*, and thought they obtained a good foundation for a fresh calumny. They counterfeited a letter from a person at *Marseilles* (I think I heard it was from the Bishop) addressed to the Archbishop of *Paris*, or to his official, in which they wrote the blackest and most abominable scandal. Father *La Mothe* came to try to draw me into his snare, and to make me say, in the presence of the people he had brought, that I had been at *Marseilles* with Father *La Combe*. "There are, said he, shocking accounts sent against you from the Bishop of *Marseilles*. You have there fallen into great scandal with Father *La Combe*: There are good witnesses of it." I replied with a smile, "The calumny is notably devised: But it had been proper to know first whether Father *La Combe* had been at *Marseilles*, for I do not believe he was ever there in his life. I was while there, with such and such, and during that time Father *La Combe* was labouring at *Verceil*." He was confounded and went off, saying, "There are witnesses of its being true." He went immediately to ask Father

La Combe if he had not been at *Marseilles*. He assured him he never had been there. They were struck with disappointment. They then gave out it was *Seisel* which was in the letter. Now this *Seisel* is a place I have never been at, and there is no Bishop there.

FATHER *La Motte* and the Provincial carried about their libels, with those propositions of *Molinos*, from house to house, saying they were the errors of Father *La Combe*. They plotted together. They determined to take a journey into *Savoy*, to collect and bring memorials against Father *La Combe* and me. The Provincial set off, though but newly returned from visiting a province bordering on *Savoy*, giving a strict charge to Father *La Motte*, who was enough inclined without it, to spare no pains or cost to ruin Father *La Combe*.

THEY plotted with the Official, a man well versed in such artifices. They suborned that woman. She told Father *La Combe* "that she had heard wonderful things of me, which had given her an ardent desire to see me." As she farther told him, *that she was in great want and distress*, he sent her to me for my charity; I gave her half a louis d'or. At that time she was a stranger to me; but, after a little converse with her, I was struck with horror: Yet I kept it to myself.

A FEW days after, she came again to ask me for something to get herself bled. I told her, "I had a maid who could do it well, whom I would get to do it for her." She replied, "that she was not a person to be bled by any but a surgeon." I then gave her a fifteen penny piece. She took it with disdain, then went and threw it to

to Father *La Combe*, asking if she was a person to be put off with fifteen pence. But she learned that evening from her husband, that the time, not yet ripe for discovery, required longer dissimulation. She then came again to Father *La Combe* to beg his pardon, saying, "it was a rash fit of passion which made her act as she did." She asked him also for the fifteen pence. He told me then nothing of all this; but I had a certainty that she was a wicked hypocrite, bent on some bad design: And so I told Father *La Combe*, who chid me for it, saying, "It was only my own imagination, that I wanted charity, for she was a religious woman."

THERE came to me a virtuous young woman, a stranger, who told me she thought herself obliged, as she knew I was intimate with father *La Combe*, to apprise me that he confessed a woman who deceived him. She told me of base things that woman had done, and of her thefts at *Paris*. I desired her to tell them to him herself. She said she had attempted it; but he told her it was acting not according to charity. In a certain shop that vile woman spoke ill of him. They let him know it, but he seemed not to believe it. She sometimes came to my house. I turned pale at the sight of her. My domestics perceived it, especially one, who felt the same horrors as I did.

C H A P. II. AND III.

[In these Chapters she relates how the vile persons who were suborned against her were detected by Father *La Combe*, and particularizes many of the odious scandals which they forged about her. How they wanted to frighten her with the terrors of Memorials being drawn out against her, accusing her of giving

giving into the errors of some persons condemned by the Church, and would have persuaded her to a sudden flight, in order that they might thereby have the fuller opportunity of proving her guilty. She continues thus :]

AT length *La Mothe* took off the mask, and said to me in the church, before *La Combe*, "It is now, my sister, that you must think of fleeing, you are charged with crimes of a deep dye." I was not moved in the least, but replied with my usual tranquillity, "If I am guilty of such crimes I cannot be too severely punished; wherefore I will not flee or go out of the way. I have made an open profession of dedicating myself to GOD entirely: And if I have done things offensive to him, whom I would wish both to love, and to cause to be loved by the whole world, even at the expence of my life, I ought by my punishment to be made an example to the world: But if I am innocent, for me to flee is not the way for my innocence to be believed."

[SHE here gives a detail of the artifices and snares set on foot to ruin F. La Combe; how they misrepresented him to the King, and procured an order to confine him in his convent till he was examined. How they concealed this order from him, and then made several pretences to bring him publickly out. How they then obtained to have him arrested as a Rebel to the King's orders, and confined to the Bastile, and goes on thus :]

—THOUGH on his trial he appeared quite innocent, and they could not find any thing whereupon to ground a condemnation, yet they made the King believe he was a dangerous man in the
article

article of religion. He was then shut up in a certain fortress of that great prison for life: But as his enemies heard that the captain in that fortress esteemed him; and treated him kindly, they got him removed into a much worse place. GOD, who beholds every thing, will reward every man according to his works. I know by an interior communication that he is very well content, and fully resigned to GOD.

LA MOTHE now endeavoured more than ever to induce me to flee, assuring me that, if I went to *Montargis*, I should be out of all trouble; but that if I did not, I should pay for it. He insisted on my taking himself for my director, which I could not agree to. He decried me wherever he went, and writ to his brethren to do the same. They writ me very abusive letters, and particularly that, if I did not put myself under his direction, I was undone. I have the letters by me still. One Father desired me in this case to make a virtue of necessity. Nay some advised me to pretend to put myself under his direction, and to deceive him; whereas I abhorred the thought of a disguise or deceit. I bore every thing with the greatest tranquillity, without taking any care to justify or defend myself, leaving it entirely to GOD to order as he should please about me: And herein he was graciously pleased to increase the peace of my soul, while every one seemed to cry against me, and to look on me as an infamous creature, except those few who knew me well by a near union of spirit. At church I heard people behind me exclaim against me, and even some priests say, "It was necessary to cast me out of the church." I left myself to GOD without reserve, being quite ready to endure the most rigorous pains and tortures, if such were his will.

I NEVER

I NEVER made any solicitation either for Father *La Combe* or myself, though charged with that among other things. Willing to owe every thing to God, I have no dependence on any creature. I would not have it said that any but God had made *Abraham* rich. Gen. xiv. 23. To lose all for him is my best gain: And to gain all without him would be my worst loss. Though at this time so general an outcry was raised against me, God did not fail to make use of me to gain many souls to himself. The more persecution raged against me the more children were given me, on whom the LORD conferred great favours through his poor handmaid.

ONE must not judge of the servants of God by what their enemies say of them, nor by their being oppressed under calumnies without any resource. JESUS CHRIST expired under pangs. God uses the like conduct towards his dearest servants, to render them conformable to his son, *in whom he is always well pleased*. But few place that conformity where it ought to be. It is not in voluntary pains or austerities, but in those which are suffered in a submission ever equal to the will of God, in a renunciation of our whole selves, to the end that God may be our all in all, conducting us according to his views, and not our own, which are generally opposite to his. In fine, all perfection consists in this entire conformity with JESUS CHRIST, not in shining things which men esteem and cry up. It will only be seen in eternity who are the true friends of God. Nothing pleases him but JESUS CHRIST, and that which bears his mark or character.

THEY were continually pressing me to flee, though the Archbishop had spoken to myself,
and

and bidden me not to leave *Paris*. But they wanted to render both me and Father *La Combe* criminal by my flight. They knew not how to make me fall into the hands of the Official: For if they accused me of crimes, it must be before other judges: And any other judge would have seen my innocence; and the false witnesses would have run the risque of suffering for it. They continually spread the outcry of horrible crimes; the Official assured me that he had heard no mention of any; for he was afraid lest I should retire out of his jurisdiction. They then made the King believe “that I was an heretic; that I
 “carried on a literary correspondence with *Molin*
 “*linos* (I, who never knew there was a *Molin*
 “*inos* in the world, till the Gazette had told me it)
 “that I had wrote a dangerous book; and that
 “on those accounts it would be necessary to is-
 “sue forth an order to put me in a convent, that
 “they might examine me; that, as I was a dan-
 “gerous person, it would be proper for me to
 “be locked up, to be allowed no commerce with
 “any one; that I held assemblies,” which was very false. To support this calumny my handwriting was counterfeited, and a letter forged as from me, importing, that I had “great designs,
 “but feared that they would prove abortive, by
 “the imprisonment of Father *La Combe*, for
 “which reason I had left off holding assemblies
 “at my house, being too closely watched; but
 “that I would hold them at the houses of such
 “and such persons, in such and such streets;” who are people that I do not know, nor ever before had heard named. This forged letter they shewed the King, and upon it an order was given for my imprisonment.

THIS order would have been put in execution two months sooner than it was, had I not fallen very sick. I had inconceivable pains and a fever. Some thought that I had an imposthume in my head. The pangs I had for five weeks made me delirious. I had also a pain in my breast and a violent cough. Twice I received, as I was thought near expiring, *the holy Sacrament*. One of my friends had acquainted Father *La Mothe*, (not knowing him to have had any hand in *F. La Combe's* imprisonment) that she had sent me a certificate from the inquisition in said Father *La Combe's* favour, having heard that his own was lost. This was a very good piece: For they made the King believe that he had run away from the inquisition; and this shewed the contrary.

FATHER *La Mothe* then came to me, when I was under excessive pains, counterfeiting all the affection and tenderness in his power, and telling me “that the affair of Father *La Combe* was going on very well, that he was just ready to come out of prison with honour, that he was very glad of it; that if he had only this certificate, he would be delivered presently. Give me it then, *said he*, and it will be done.” At first I made a difficulty of doing it. “What! *said he*, will you be the cause of ruining poor Father *La Combe*, having it in your power to save him, and cause us that affliction, for want of what you have in your hands.” I yielded, ordering it to be brought and given him. He suppressed it, and gave out that it was lost. It never could be got from him again. The Ambassador from the Court of *Turin* sent a page to me for this

this certificate, designing the proper use of it to serve Father *La Combe*. I referred him to Father *La Mothe*. The Page went to him and asked him for it. He denied I had given him it; saying, "Her brain is disordered which makes her "imagine it." The Page came back to me and told me his answer: The persons in my chamber bore witness that I had given it to him. Yet all signified nothing: It could not be got out of his hands; but on the contrary he insulted me, and set others also to do it, though I was so weak that I seemed to be at the very gates of death.

THEY told me they only waited for my recovery to clap me in prison. He made his brethren believe that I had treated him ill. They writ to me; one, "that it was for my crimes that I suffered; and that I should put myself under the "conduct of Father *La Mothe* or otherwise I "should repent it;" another, that "I was frantic "and ought to be bound; lethargic, and to be "awakened; a monster of pride since I would not "suffer myself to be cleansed and conducted by "Father *La Mothe*." Such was my daily feast in the extremity of my pains; deserted of my friends, and opprest of my enemies; the former being ashamed of me, through the calumnies which were forged and industriously spread; the latter let loose to persecute me; under all which I kept silence, leaving myself to the LORD. To Father *La Mothe's* insults I returned mildness, and made him presents.

THERE was not any kind of infamy, error, sorcery, or sacrilege, of which they did not accuse me. As soon as I was able to be carried to the Church in a chair, I was told I must speak to the Prebend. (It was a snare concerted between Fa-

ther *La Motte* and the Canon at whose house I lodged) I spoke to him with much simplicity, and he approved of what I said. Yet two days after they gave out that I had uttered many things, and accused many persons; and from hence they procured the banishment of sundry persons with whom they were displeased, persons whom I had never seen or heard of. They were men of honour. One of them was banished, because he said, "my little book is a good one." It is remarkable that they say nothing to those who prefixed their approbations, and that, far from condemning the book, it has been reprinted since I have been in prison, and advertisements of it posted up at the Archbishop's palace, and all over *Paris*. In regard to others, when they find faults in their books, they condemn the books and leave the person at liberty: But as for me, my book is approved, sold and spread, while I am kept a prisoner for it.

THE same day that those gentlemen were banished I received a *lettre de cachet*, or sealed order and addressed to me, to repair to the Convent of the *Visitation* of St. *Mary's* in the suburb of St. *Antoine*. I received it with a tranquillity which surprized the bearer exceedingly. He could not forbear expressing it, having seen the extreme sorrow of those who were only banished. He was so touched with it as to shed tears. And though his order was to carry me off directly, he was not afraid to trust me, but left me all the day, desiring me to repair to St. *Mary's* in the evening. On that day many of my friends came to see me and found me very chearful, which surprized such of them as knew my case. I could not stand, I was so weak, having the fever every night, it being only a fortnight since I was thought to be expiring

piring. I imagined they would leave me my daughter and maid to serve me. My daughter was most at my heart, having cost me much care in her education. I had endeavoured, with divine assistance, to root out her faults, and to dispose her to have no will of her own; which is the best disposition for a child. She was not yet twelve years of age.

C H A P. V.

ON the twenty-ninth of *January*, 1688, I went to *St. Mary's*. There they let me know I must neither have my daughter nor a maid to serve me, but must be locked up alone in a chamber. Indeed it touched me to my heart when my daughter was taken from me. They would neither allow her to be in that house, nor any body to bring me any news of her. I was then obliged to sacrifice my daughter, as if she were mine no longer. The people of the house were prepossessed with so frightful an account of me, that they looked at me with horror. For my jailor they singled out a Nun, who they thought would treat me with the greatest rigour, and they were not mistaken therein.

THEY asked me who was now my confessor. I named him; but he was seized with such a fright that he denied it; though I could have produced many persons who had seen me at his confessional. So then they said they had caught me in a lie; and I was not to be trusted. My acquaintance then said they knew me not, and others were at liberty to invent stories, and say *all manner of evil of me*. The woman, appointed for my keeper, was gained over by my enemies, to torment me as an heretic, an enthusiast, one crackbrained and

and an hypocrite. God alone knows what she made me suffer. As she sought to surprize me in my words, I watched them, to be more exact in them; but I fared the worse for it. I made more slips and gave her more advantages over me thereby, beside the trouble in my own mind for it. I then left myself as I was, and resolved, though this woman would bring me to the scaffold, by the false reports she was continually carrying to the Prioress, that I would simply resign myself to my lot; so I re-entered into my former condition.

Soon after I came into this convent I had a dream, in which I saw the sky opening all on a sudden, and as it were a shower of bright fire. There were with me a multitude of people, all of whom betook themselves to flight, in order to escape it. As to me I prostrated myself upon the ground, and said, "Oh my God, it is I who am the victim of thy justice." I soon awakened full of certainty that I should earn this title of *victim of divine justice*. Monsieur CHARON the Official and Doctor of *Sorbonne* came four times to examine me. Our LORD did me the favour which he promised to his apostles, viz. to make me answer much better than if I had studied. Luke xxi. 14, 15, They said to me, "if I had explained myself, as I now did, all along in that *short and easy method of prayer*, I should not now have been here." My last examination was about a counterfeit letter, which they read and let me see. I told them the hand was no way like mine. They said, "it was only a copy; they had the original at home." I desired a sight of it, but could not obtain it. I told them "I never wrote it, nor did I know the person to whom it was addressed;" but they took scarce any notice of what I said.

AFTER

AFTER this letter was read the Official turned to me and said, "you see Madam, that after such a letter there was foundation enough for imprisoning you." "Yes Sir, said I, if I had wrote it." I shewed them its falsehoods and inconsistencies, but all in vain. I was left two months, and treated worse and worse, before either of them came again to me. Till then I had always some hope that, seeing my innocence, they would do me justice: But now I saw that they did not want to find me innocent, but to make me appear guilty.

THE Official alone came the next time, and told me, "I must speak no more of the false letter; that it was nothing." How nothing, said I, to counterfeit a person's writing, and to make one appear an enemy to the state!" He replied, "We will seek out the author of it." "The Author, said I, is no other than the Scrivener GAUTIER." He then demanded where the papers were which I wrote on the scriptures. I told him, "I would give them up when I should be out of prison; but was not willing to tell with whom I had lodged them."

ABOUT three or four days before *Easter* he came again, with the Doctor, and a verbal process drawn up against me for rebelling, in not giving up my papers. Copies of my writings were then put into their hands; for I had not the originals. I know not where those who got them from me have put them: But I am firm in the faith that they will all be preserved, in spite of the storm. The prioress asked the Official how my affair went. He signified very well, and that I should soon be discharged: And this became the
common

common talk; but I had a presentiment of the contrary.

CHAP. VI.

I HAD an inexpressible satisfaction and joy in suffering, and being a prisoner. The confinement of my body made me better relish the freedom of my mind. *St. Joseph's* day was to me a memorable day; for then my state had more of heaven than of earth beyond what any expression can reach. I expected from it that there was some new cup for me to drink, as the glorious transfiguration of CHRIST was an introduction to his passion; depriving himself for the rest of his life of the effusions of the divinity, the supports of the human life, which he had kept before, the beatitude being suspended, the sufferings unabated, unrelieved: In like manner I may say it fell out to me, though unworthy to participate the states of JESUS CHRIST, and with the infinite disproportion of a poor weak creature to him who was both GOD and man. This day of *St. Joseph*, who is a saint to whom I am intimately united, was like a day of transfiguration for me. It seemed to me that I had then nothing left of the creature; but that time was followed as it were with a suspension of every favour then enjoyed, a dispensation of new sufferings. I was obliged to sacrifice myself anew, and to drink the very dregs of the bitter draught. The dream I had had, wherein all the indignation of GOD fell upon me, came up again in my mind.

I NEVER had any gall of resentment against my persecutors, though I well knew them, their spirit and their actions. JESUS CHRIST and the saints saw their persecutors, and at the same time saw *that they could have no power except it were given them*

them from above. John xix. 11. Loving the strokes which God gives, one cannot hate the hand which he makes use of to strike with. A few days after the Official came, and told me he gave me the liberty of the Cloyster, that is, to go and come in the house. They were now very industrious in urging my daughter to consent to a marriage, which, had it taken place, would have been her ruin. To succeed herein, they had placed her with a relation of that gentleman whom they wanted her to marry. I had all my confidence in God, that he would not permit it to be accomplished, as that person had no tincture of Christianity, being abandoned in his principles and morals!

[HERE she continues to relate the various snares, by which they wanted to induce her to give up her daughter, in order to obtain her own release, and the vicissitudes she suffered. Now promising acquittance and liberty, again threatening confinement for life, and even Death on the Scaffold.]

C H A P. VII.

S OON after the Official and Doctor came to tell the Prioress I must be closely locked up. She represented to them that the chamber I was in was small, having an opening to the light or air, only on one side, through which the sun shone all the day long, and that being the month of July it must soon be my death. They paid no regard thereto. She asked why I must be thus closely locked up. They said, "I had committed horrible things in her house, even within the last month, and had scandalized the Nuns." She protested the contrary, and assured them the whole community had received great edification from me, and could not but admire my patience and moderation. But it was all in vain: And the

the poor woman could not refrain from tears, at a forgery so remote from the truth.

THEY then sent for me, and told me, "I had done base things in the last month." I asked what things? They would not tell me. I said then, "that I would suffer as long and as much as it should please GOD; that this affair was begun on forgeries against me, and so continued. That GOD was witness of every thing." The Doctor told me, to take GOD for a witness in such a thing was a crime. I replied, "Nothing in the world could hinder me from having recourse to GOD." I then retired, and was shut up more closely than at first: And because there was no key, they fastened the chamber door with a piece of wood, or bar across it. I had an interior joy at this new humiliation. Oh what pleasure, my supreme Love, to be for thee in the most abject condition!

[HERE she continues to relate the severity of her treatment; how she was shut up in that very small chamber in the month of July, till she was absolutely at the point of death, being thrown into a violent fever, and almost stifled with the closeness of the place, having a defluction and sore throat, before she was permitted to have any assistance.]

IN the time of the ancient law there were several of the LORD's martyrs, who suffered for asserting and trusting in the one true GOD. In the primitive church of CHRIST the martyrs shed their blood, for maintaining the truth of JESUS, CHRIST crucified: But now there are martyrs of the holy Spirit, who suffer for their dependence on it, for maintaining its reign in souls, and for being victims of the divine Will.

IT

It is this spirit which *is to be poured out on all flesh*, as saith the prophet JOEL. The martyrs of JESUS CHRIST have been glorious martyrs, he having drank up the confusion of that martyrdom: But the martyrs of the holy Spirit are martyrs of reproach and ignominy. The devil no more exercises his power against their faith or belief, but directly attacks the dominion of the holy Spirit, opposing its celestial motion in souls, and discharging his hatred on the bodies of those whose minds he cannot hurt. Oh holy Spirit, a Spirit of love, let me ever be subjected to thy will, and, as a leaf is moved before the wind, so let me by thy divine breath. As the impetuous wind breaks all that resists it, so break all that opposes thy empire, even the towering cedars, which stand in such opposition.

It is said of JESUS CHRIST that he *yielded up the ghost*, or sent forth his spirit. (MATT. xxvii. 50.) This was both the consummation of his pains, and the consummation of all ages, even of all things, which through his Spirit shall be done in the whole world. Hence he said, *it is finished*, or consummated (John xix. 37.) Since his death, St. Paul has told us that *he shall deliver up the kingdom to GOD his Father*, (1 Cor. xv. 24.) to the end that GOD by his Spirit may reign on earth. JESUS CHRIST taught to pray *that the kingdom of GOD may come, and his will be done on earth as in heaven*, which implies the subjection of the whole will in the creature to that of the creator, even without any reluctance, hesitation or delay. Then will his reign be consummated, and *his enemies become his footstool*. Oh thus may all be reduced into one, though it be through much destruction of what opposes this kingdom, according to CHRIST's words, *viz. I came not to send peace but*
E e e *a sword.*

a sword. Mat. x. 34. I am come to send fire on earth. And what will I, if it be already kindled? Luke xii. 49.

CHAP. VIII.

[SHE begins this Chapter with relating their artifices to compel her to a formal retraction of all the crimes, of which she was accused, and to impeach La Combe, as the original deceiver. When baffled in this, they framed some execrable forgeries, by which they made her accuse herself of the most abominable crimes, and impeach La Combe as the person who had seduced and deceived her.]

THOUGH Father La Combe be under close confinement, we do not fail to communicate in God. Many spiritual persons, to whom the LORD has united me by the tie of maternity, experience the same communication, though in my absence, and find in this union the remedy or relief of their pains. Oh God, who hast chosen in this poor creature to erect the throne of thy goodness and severity, thou knowest that I pass over many things, either for want of remembering, or of knowing how to express them. I have said what I could, and that with the utmost sincerity and entire truth. Though I have been obliged to describe the procedure of those who persecute me, I have not done it out of resentment, since I love them at my heart, and pray for them, leaving to God the care of defending me, and delivering me out of their hands, without making any movement of my own for it. I have apprehended and believed that God would have me write every thing sincerely, that his name may be glorified; that the things done in secret against his servants should one day be published on the house tops; for the more

more they strive to conceal them from the eyes of men, the more will God in his own time make them all manifest.

AT present I experience two states, that of CHRIST crucified and of his infant state, the one of daily crosses, very violent, without number or intermission; the other so child-like, simple and candid, that methinks if my soul were to be impressed any way, there could come nothing out of it but candor, innocence, submission and patience. Oh my GOD, methinks thou hast made me a prodigy, a monument of thy goodness and wonderful works! There is wrought in me something of the original, which is communicated to me after a manner inexplicable, which nothing but experience can comprehend; 'Tis then to thee, O MY LOVE, that I render what I have writ for thee,

DONE this 22d of August, 1688, aged forty years, in my prison, which I love and cherish, as I find it sanctified by MY LOVE.

I FORGOT to tell that I had *a sense* of the state of the souls which came to me, and of that of the persons which were given me, how far distant soever they were from me. By *sense* I mean an interior impression of what they were, especially such as passed for spiritual. I knew presently whether they were upright or artful, their degree, or their self-love, for which I felt a rejection. I knew when they were stout in themselves, and supported by the virtue they imagined they had, by which they measured others, and condemned in their minds those who were not like themselves, though more perfect. These persons who think themselves righteous, and are thought so by others, are much more unacceptable to God, than
some

some sinners from weakness, who are looked on with contempt; whom nevertheless God favours with great mercies: Which will not be fully seen but at the day of judgment. He beholds *afar off* those souls which are so exalted and full of themselves, though they fancy themselves humble, because they appear in some acts of humility, which for the most part increase the high opinion they have of themselves. If they were to suffer some real humiliation, then would appear their want of solidity. Oh if people knew how much God loves the true littleness of spirit in the creature, they would behold it with amazement. When they speak to me of some persons of piety, my inward sense rejects those who are not in the low state I have mentioned; and admits those who are subject to God in that state. There is something in me which refuses the evil, however glossy or covered; and greatly loves the true and solid good, I find it is the same even in the practice of virtues; or what pass for such. This spirit discerns the real virtue from that which only wears its likeness. Of such as have left this life and are now accounted saints, it esteems those most who have been most annihilated, and whom God has most sanctified by his own operation; it does not join in the world's cry, in attributing to others that which they wanted.

It was thought I was about coming out of prison, and every thing seemed to tend toward it. But the LORD gave me a sense that, far from being willing to deliver me, their consultations were only laying new snares to ruin me more effectually, to make Father *La Mothe* known to the King, and esteemed by him. The 22d of August I walked under an impression of JESUS CHRIST in an agony, seeing the counsel of the Jews against him,
I knew

I knew that none but God could deliver me out of prison, and I was satisfied that he would do it one day by his own right hand, though ignorant of the manner, and leaving it wholly to himself.

ONE day thinking why I could not invoke any of the saints, though united to them in God, it was put into my mind, that domesticks had need of credit and intercessors, while the spouse readily obtains every thing without asking any thing. He of his infinite goodness prevents her. Oh how little known is the holy author of all good! They examine my actions. They cry out that I do not say over my chaplet or beads, that I have no devotion for the holy Virgin. Oh divine MARY, though knowest how my heart is singly devoted to God, and the union which he has formed betwixt us in himself. I can do nothing but what he directs, depending wholly on his will.

[SHE here describes the manner in which Providence conducted matters, so as that she was vindicated to Madam *Maintenon*, and at length obtained her release.]

C H A P. IX.

[IN this Chapter she relates how they wanted to exact captious concessions, and false retractions from her; but that at length she was honourably set at liberty, and a few days afterwards had her first interview with the Abbe *Fenelon*, to whom she is united, as *Jonathan* to *David*, and styles him her spiritual child.]

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

I HAVE thought of writing no more of what regards my interior state, not having words to express it, being so perfectly separated from all that can fall under sentiment, expression, or human conception.

I SHALL only say that, after being raised up again I found in myself, some years before my being put into what is called the apostolic state, or mission for the help of others, all selfishness consumed in the purgatory I had passed through. I found myself in a felicity like that of the blessed. Nothing here below touched me. At present I see not any thing on earth which can give me pain in regard to myself.

THE happiness of such a soul can never be comprehended without experience! Those who die in being employed in thus helping their neighbour, die in the supreme felicity, though loaden with exterior crosses.

WHEN it pleased GOD to honour me with his mission, he shewed me that the true father in JESUS CHRIST, the Apostolic Pastor, ought like him to suffer for men, to bear their infirmities, and to be cloathed with their very weaknesses. He inclines the heart to what he demands, imprinting on it words like these, “ I was happy, “ I possessed glory, I was GOD : But I quitted it “ all, and subjected myself to pain, contempt, “ ignominy and punishment. I became a man “ to save men. If thou art willing to finish *what* “ *is behind of my suffering*, and that I form in “ thee an extension of my quality of Redeemer, thou

" thou must consent to lose the happiness thou
 " enjoyest, to be subject to weaknesses and mi-
 " series, to bear the infirmities of those with
 " whom I shall entrust thee, to pay their debts,
 " and in short to be exposed not only to their in-
 " terior pangs, from which (as to thyself) thou
 " hast been delivered, but to all the most violent
 " persecutions. If I had continued in my pri-
 " vate life, I had never suffered any persecution.
 " None are persecuted but such as are employed,
 " in the help of souls."

HE shewed me that he called me not, as some
 had thought, to gain exterior proselytes to the
 church, but singly to the propagation of his own
 good spirit. He does not so much design me for
 the first conversion of sinners, as to make those
 who are touched with a right desire to enter into
 perfect conversion. Since God has been pleased
 to bestow on me part of the Apostolic state, what
 have I not suffered? And yet my love for those
 souls, instead of desiring to be freed from it, has
 increased in proportion to my increase of suffering
 for them, even till their entire purification. Then
 the union, which has often been covered with
 clouds, becomes like a clear air, every where pe-
 netrated with the light of the sun. As to the
 souls which are the most consummate in the love
 of God, living among men, their exterior is co-
 vered with apparent weaknesses, which (like a
 poor skin) hide infinite treasures from the view
 of others, and tend to save them from being lost.

UPON first entering into the new life men find
 themselves so different from the rest of mankind,
 and think so differently from what they have been
 used to do, that the faults and errors of their
 neighbours become insupportable to them. The
 soul

soul is ready to cry out, *Now LORD lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.* Luke ii. 29. But in regard to such as have the painful task of conducting others, if the souls conducted could penetrate, across their feeble outside appearance, the depth of their grace, they would look on them with too high a respect, and would not die to the support which such a conduct would give them. If the Jews could have penetrated through the exterior of JESUS CHRIST, common with other men, they never had persecuted him, but would have been in a continual admiration. These persons then are a paradox both in their own eyes and in the eyes of those who behold them: For they see no more than a plain and homely appearance in them. Celestial wisdom flows from their heart and mouth, like a spring of divine sap, from trees pregnant therewith, which communicates life to an infinite number of branches, though one sees on them only a coarse and mossy rind. Hence men who presume to judge of these souls are very liable to err in judgment, and, as says the Apostle Jude, like *filthy dreamers, to despise dominion and speak evil of dignities, of things which they know not,* (Jude, v. 3. 10.) the holy mysteries of GOD, revealed by him only to the souls which he has prepared to receive them.

SUCH souls can only speak and write through the actual light of the present moment, which lasts no longer than it is necessary to speak, or write ; without being able to see or think afterward on what they saw before, unless the actual light be restored to them. It is like a person to whom one opens a cabinet full of treasures, who sees them so long as it is open, but sees nothing of them when it is shut up again. Only the spouse *opens and none can*

can shut; and when he shuts none can open. Such a soul cares neither for honour nor wealth nor life. If it were not so, it could not serve other souls in the whole extent of the designs of God.

IF GOD retained these hidden souls in the secret of his presence, they would be screened from the persecutions of men: But how willingly would they suffer fire and rack for a single soul! No wonder if the Devil stir up all quarters of his dominion against Apostolic souls; he knows that such a soul, were it hearkened to, would destroy his empire. All exterior devotions hurt but little; for he makes reprisals on the self-love of such devotions, for what they make him lose by the regularity of their observances: But there is no gain for him to make on a soul devoted to the truth of God, and to his pure love; who lets *self* be destroyed by the sovereign power of God. The devil cannot approach these souls but at a distance. The rage with which he is fired against them has no bounds. To be devoted to God, one must have no choice or preference of esteem for one action above another. People form to themselves ideas, and imagine that a soul is given to God in some particular manner: And when they see any thing contrary to those ideas, they conclude God is not there, and yet it is often where he is most. He sets no value on any virtue of our forming. A state which depends on any good, which is capable of being conceived or distinguished, is a virtuous state, but not a divine state.

THE saints of the LORD are sanctified, not like other saints, by the practice of some virtues; but by the LORD himself, and by an infinite suppleness to every intimation of his will, even in the smallest things, which is the real possession of

F f f

every

every virtue. These are saints after his manner; and not after that of men. Let there not be any virtue or holiness for me, but what flows from this spring. Thus may I, and the children whom God has given me, go on from faith to faith! Though the soul which is lost in God has an infinite suppleness of obedience to his will, yet it is more particularly attracted toward other souls in which it finds an harmonious correspondence, and on the other hand appears reserved, and to have pain to speak before others, being sensible of their repugnant dispositions. One must judge of souls, even in the child's state, more by what God has done for them than by what one sees; for otherwise one would judge of them more from one's own state than from the state which they were in. What seems weak in God far surpasses the greatest force in men. It is what causes the joint alliance of those seeming contraries, divine strength with the weakness of a child. 1688.

C H A P. XI.

[UPON her coming out of St. *Mary's* she retired into the community of Mad. *Miramion*, kept her bed of a fever three months, and had an imposthume in her eye. Yet at this time she was accused of going continually out, holding suspected assemblies, together with other abominable and groundless falshoods. In this house her daughter was married to Mons. L. *Nicholas Fouquet count de Vaux*; She removed to her daughter's house, and on account of her extreme youth, lived with her two years and an half, and even there her enemies were ever forging one thing or other against her. She then wanted to retire quite secretly, to the Benedictines at *Montargis*, (her native place)

place) but it was discovered, and friends and enemies jointly prevented it.

THE family in which my daughter was married being of the number of Abbe *Fenelon's* friends, I had the opportunity of often seeing him at our house. We had some conversations on the subject of a spiritual life, in which he made several objections to my experiences therein. I answered them with my usual simplicity, which gained upon him as I found. As the affair of *Molinos* at that time made a great noise, the plainest things were distrusted, and the terms used by mystic writers exploded. But I so clearly expounded every thing to him, and so fully solved all his objections, that nobody became better convinced of my sentiments than he; which has since laid the foundation of that persecution he has suffered, as his answers to the bishop of *Meaux* evidently shew to all that have read them without prejudice.

I now took a little private house, to follow the inclination I had for retirement; where I sometimes had the pleasure of seeing my family and a few particular friends. I often went to St. *Cyr*. Certain young ladies of that house having informed Mad. *Maintenon*, that they found in my conversation something which attracted them to GOD, she encouraged me to continue my instructions to them; and by the fine change in some of them with whom before she had not been well pleased, she found she had no reason to repent it. She then treated me with much respect; and for three years after, while this lasted, I received from her every mark of esteem and confidence. But that very thing afterward drew on me the most severe persecution. The free entrance I had into the house, and the confidence which some young ladies

ladies of the court, distinguished for their rank and piety, placed in me, gave no small uneasiness to the people who had persecuted me. The Directors took umbrage at it, and under pretext of the troubles I had had some years before, and of Quietism which they said was making a great progress, they engaged the Bishop of *Chartres*, Superior of *St. Cyr*, to present to Mad. *Maintenon* that, by my particular conduct, I troubled the order of the house ; and that the young women in it were so attached to me, and to what I said to them, that they no longer hearkened to their superiors. I then went no more to *St. Cyr*. I answered the young ladies, who writ to me, no more but by letters unsealed, which passed through the hands of Mad. *Maintenon*.

Soon after I fell sick. The physicians, after trying in vain the usual method of cure, ordered me to repair to the waters of *Bourbon*. My lackey had been got to give me some poison. After taking it, I suffered such exquisite pains that, without speedy succour, I should have died in a few hours. The lackey immediately ran away, and I have never seen him since. When I was at *Bourbon*, the waters which I threw up burned like spirits of wine. I had no thought of being poisoned, till the physicians of *Bourbon* on throwing the said water into the fire, assured me of it. The waters had but little effect. I suffered for above seven years after it. Since that time three or four attempts have been made to poison me: But GOD has preserved me from it, through his mercy, and the presentiments which he gave me of it.

C H A P.

C H A P. XII.

[THIS Chapter contains mostly a continuation of the general decry, and persecution that was raised against her, notwithstanding the very private and retired life which she led. All being insufficient to screen her from calumnies and persecutions, and speaks as follows of her state.]

—GOD kept me at that time in such a disposition of sacrifice, that I was quite resigned to suffer every thing, and to receive from his hand all that might befall me, since for me to offer any way to vindicate myself would be only vindicating the air. When the LORD is willing to make any one suffer, he permits even the most virtuous people to be readily blinded toward them; and I may confess that the persecution of the wicked is but little, when compared with that of the servants of GOD, deceived and animated with a zeal which they think right. Many of these were now, by the artifices made use of, greatly imposed on in regard to me. I was represented to them in an odious light, as a strange creature. Since then, I must, oh my LORD, be conformable to thee, to please thee; I set more value on my humiliation, and on seeing myself condemned of every body, than if I saw myself on the summit of honour in the world. How often have I said, even in the bitterness of my heart, that I should be more afraid of one reproach of my conscience, than of the outcry and condemnation of all men!

C H A P. XIII.

[HER first acquaintance with the Bishop of *Meaux*, to whom she is introduced by her intimate friend

friend the Duke of *Chevreuse*. She gives him the foregoing History of her Life, and he confesses: "that he had found therein such an unction
 "as he had rarely done in other books, and that
 "he had spent three days in reading it, with an
 "impression of the presence of God on his mind
 "all that time."

[SHE proposes to the Bishop to examine all her writings, which he takes four or five months to do, and then advances all his objections; to which she gives answers, but from his unacquaintance with the interior paths, she cannot clear up all the difficulties which he finds in them.]

C H A P. XIV.

[THE beginning of this Chapter contains only a continuation of the objections, which the Bishop pretended to find with her writings, and goes on thus:]

By looking into the Ecclesiastical histories for ages past, we may see that God hath sometimes made use of laymen, and of women to instruct, edify, and help souls in their progress to perfection: And I think one of the reasons of God's acting thus, is that glory may not be ascribed to any, but to himself alone. For this purpose, *he has chosen the weak things of this world, to confound such as are mighty.* 1 Cor. i. 27.

JEALOUS of the attributes which men pay to other men, which are only due to himself, he has made a paradox of such persons, that he alone may have the glory of his own works. I pray God with my whole heart sooner to crush me utterly, with the most dreadful destruction, than
 to

to suffer me to take the least honour to myself, of any thing which he has been pleased to do by me for the good of others. I am only a poor NOTHING. GOD is all powerful. He delights to operate, and exercise his power by mere NOTHINGS.

THE first time that I wrote a history of myself it was very short. In it I had particularized my faults and sins, and said little of the favours of GOD. I was ordered to burn it, to write another, and in it to omit nothing, any way remarkable that had befallen me. I did it. It is a crime to publish the secrets of the King; but it is a good thing to declare the favours of the LORD our GOD, and to magnify his mercies the more by the meanness of the subject on which he confers them. If herein I have failed, the fire will try and purify it all. When I first gave myself to the LORD it was without any reserve: And for every thing of mine, which I only did out of obedience, I am content with whatever may be permitted, or ordained, as best in the case. It is my consolation that GOD is not less great, perfect or happy, for any mistakes or errors of mine. My soul can do nothing else but love him, and repose itself in his love. It seems that what proceeds from me flows from that source: And since *as many as are led by the Spirit of GOD are the children of GOD*, an humble hope attends me that I appertain to his family.

C H A P. XV.

[THE general outcry encreases. Mad. *Maintenon* is gained over, and becomes prejudiced against her. She writes to her by the Duke of *Beauvilliers*, and requests an appointment of persons to examine into her Life and Doctrine, offering to retire

retire into any prison, till fully exculpated. But her proposal is rejected. Mons. *Fouquet*, one of her most intimate friends and relations dies; he had been her steady and constant support. She feels the loss, but rejoices in his felicity, for he had been a true servant of God.]

BEING now determined to retire out of the way of giving offence to any, I wrote to some of my friends, and bade them a last farewell; not knowing whether I were to be carried off by the indisposition which I then laboured under, which had been a constant fever for forty days past, or to recover from it. I wrote further, "That I prayed God to finish in them the good work he had begun, that, if I had contributed any good to them by his grace, he would not be unmindful to preserve in them that which was his own, viz. the renunciation of themselves, to bear the cross, to follow JESUS CHRIST with hearts filled with his pure love; that they might judge it was for them, and not for myself that I deprived myself of all commerce with them, by whom I had often been much edified; but now, if I stayed, I might hurt them without designing it, and be an occasion of trouble and scandal to them; that I therefore desired them to look upon me as a thing forgotten."

[SHE writ them a long letter; mentioning in it her particular enemies, one of whom is the Curate of *Versailles*, who had formerly professed a high esteem for her, visited her often, declared his sentiments were the same with hers; but of late he had imagined, that she had drawn away the Countess of G. and the Duchess of M. from under his direction. Hereupon she writes, "When
" these

“ these ladies and others were in the vanities of
 “ the world, when they patched and painted, and
 “ some of them were in the way to ruin their fa-
 “ milies by gaming and profusion of expence in
 “ dress, nobody arose to say any thing against
 “ it, they were quietly suffered to do it. When
 “ they have broke off from all this, then they
 “ cry out against me; as if I had ruined them.
 “ Had I drawn them from piety into luxury,
 “ they would not make such an outcry. The
 “ Duchess of M. at her giving herself up to
 “ God, thought herself obliged to quit the Court,
 “ which was to her like a dangerous rock, in or-
 “ der to bestow her time on the education of her
 “ children and the care of her family, which till
 “ then she had neglected. I beseech you there-
 “ fore to gather all the memorials you can against
 “ me: And if I am found guilty of the things
 “ they accuse me of, I ought to be punished
 “ more than any other, since God has brought
 “ me to know him and love him, and I am well
 “ assured that there is no communion betwixt
 “ CHRIST and BELIAL.”

I SENT them at the same time my two little
 printed books, with my commentaries on the
 Holy Scriptures. I also, by their order, set about
 a work to facilitate their examination, and to
 spare them as much time and trouble as I could,
 which was to collect a great number of passages
 out of approved mystic writers, which shewed
 the conformity of my writings with those used by
 the holy penmen. It was a large work. I caused
 them to be transcribed by the quire, as I had writ
 them, in order to send them to the three commis-
 sioners. I also, as occasion presented, cleared up
 the dubious and obscure places; for, as I had writ
 them at a time when the affairs of *Molinos* had

not broke out, I used the less precaution in expressing my thoughts, not imagining that they would ever be turned into an evil sense. This work was entitled *the Justifications*; it was composed in fifty days, and appeared to be very sufficient to clear up the matter. But the Bishop of *Meaux* would never suffer it to be read.*

C H A P. XVIII.

AFTER all the examinations, and making nothing out against me, who would not have thought but they would have left me to rest in peace? But quite otherwise, the more my innocence appeared, the more did they, who had undertaken to render me criminal, put every spring in motion to effect it. I offered the Bishop of *Meaux* to go to spend some time in any community within his diocese, that he might be better acquainted with me. He proposed to me that of *St. Mary de Meaux*, which I accepted, but in going thither in the depth of winter I had like to have perished in the snow, being stopt four hours, the coach having entered into it, and being almost buried in it, in a deep hollow. I was drawn out at the coach door with one maid. We sat upon the snow, resigned to the mercy of God, and expected nothing but death. I never had more tranquillity of mind, though chilled and soaked with the snow, which melted on us. Occasions like these are such as shew whether we are perfectly resigned to God or not. This poor girl and I were easy in our minds, in a state of entire resignation, though sure of dying if we passed the night there, and seeing no likelihood of

* It has since been printed in three vols. small 8vo.

of any coming to our succour. At length some waggoners came up, who with difficulty drew us through the snow.

THE Bishop, when he heard of it, was astonished, and had no little self-complacency to think that I had thus risked my life to obey him so punctually: And yet afterwards he gave all this the names of *artifice* and *hypocrisy*. Thus men who look at the tree, with an *evil* eye, account its fruits to be all *evil*. It is a strange hypocrisy which endures through one's whole life, and which far from bringing with it any advantage in this world, causes only crosses, calumnies, poverty, persecutions and every kind of afflictions. I think one never has seen any hypocrisy like this. There are only two objects which hypocrites have in view; *either to win the esteem of men or to make a fortune*. I am certainly a bad hypocrite, and have learned the trade badly. I take God to witness, that if to be Empress of the whole earth, and canonized while living, I must have gone through what I have done, (which was with the single view of being devoted to God without any reserve,) I would rather have begged my bread, and died as a criminal. Thus I render testimony for myself in the presence of God. "That I
 " have not desired to please any but him alone;
 " that I have sought him only for himself; and
 " that I dread every selfish interest of my own
 " worse than death; that so long a series of per-
 " secutions, which in all likelihood will last as
 " long as my life, has never made me change
 " sentiment, nor repent of having given myself
 " wholly to him, and of having left all for him.

THERE were times indeed when I found nature overcharged: But the love of God and his
 grace

grace rendered sweet to me the very worst of bit-
ters. His invisible hand supported me. Else I
had sunk under so many probations. Sometimes
I said to myself, *All thy waves and thy billows are
gone over me.* Psal. xlii. 7. *Thou hast bent thy bow
and set me as a mark for the arrow. Thou hast
caused all the arrows of thy quiver to enter into my
reins.* Lam. iii. 12. 13. It seemed to me as if every
one thought he was in the right to treat me ill,
and rendered service to GOD in doing it. I then
comprehended that it was the very manner in
which JESUS CHRIST suffered. *He was number-
ed with the transgressors.* Mark xv. 28. He was
condemned by the sovereign pontiff, chief priests,
doctors of the law, and judges deputed by the
Romans, who valued themselves on doing justice.
Happy they who by suffering for the will of GOD
under all the like circumstances, have so near a
relation to the sufferings of JESUS CHRIST!

FOR six weeks after my arrival at *Meaux*, I
was in a continual fever, nor had I recovered from
my indisposition, when I was waited on by the
Bishop, who would fain have compelled me to
give it under my hand, that I did not believe the
Word Incarnate, (or CHRIST manifest in the
flesh.) I answered him, “ that through the grace
“ of GOD, I knew how to suffer, even to death,
“ but not how to sign such falsehoods.” Several of
the Nuns who overheard this conversation, and
perceiving the sentiments of the Bishop, they
joined with the Prioress, in giving a testimonial,
not only of my good conduct, but of their belief
in the soundness of my faith.

C H A P. XIX.

[THE Bishop of *Meaux*, in some days after,
brings her a confession of faith, and a submission
of

of her books to the church, that she may sign it, promising to give her a certificate, which he had prepared; but on her delivering him her submission signed, he, notwithstanding his promise, refused to give the certificate. In some time after, he endeavoured to make her sign his pastoral letter, and acknowledge she had fallen into those errors, which he there lays to her charge, and made many demands of her of the like absurd and unreasonable nature, threatening her with those persecutions she afterwards endured, in case of non-compliance. However she continued resolute, in refusing to put her name to falsehoods. At length, after she had remained about six months at *Meaux*, he gave her the certificate; but finding Mad. *Maintenon* disapproved of the certificate he had granted, he wanted to give her another in lieu of it. Her refusal to deliver up the first certificate enraged the Bishop, and as she understood they intended to push matters with the utmost violence, she says, "I thought, though I were resigned to whatever might fall out, yet I ought to take prudent measures to avoid the threatening storm." Many places of retreat were offered me; but I was not free in my mind to accept of any, not to embarrass any body, nor involve in trouble my friends and my family, to whom they might attribute my escape. I took the resolution of continuing in *Paris*, of living there in some private place with my maids, who were trusty and sure, and in general to hide myself from the view of the world. I continued thus for above five or six months. I passed the day all alone in reading, in praying to God, and in working. But the 27th of December, 1695, I was arrested, though exceedingly indisposed at that time, and conducted to *Vincennes*. I was three days in the custody of Mons. *des Grèz*, who had arrested

arrested me; because the King would not consent to my being put into prison; saying several times over, *that a Convent was sufficient*. They deceived his justice by still stronger 'calumnies. They painted me in his eyes, in colours so black, that they made him scruple his goodness and equity. He then consented to my being taken to *Vincennes*.

CHAP. XX.

I SHALL not speak of that long persecution, which has made so much noise, for a series of ten years imprisonments, in all sorts of prisons, and of a banishment almost as long, and not yet ended, through crosses, calumnies and all imaginable sorts of sufferings. There are facts too odious on the parts of divers persons, which charity induces me to cover: And it is in this sense that *charity covers a multitude of sins*. 1 PET. iv. 8. And there are others on the part of those who, having been seduced by ill-disposed persons, are yet respected by me for their piety and other reasons, though they have shewed a zeal too bitter for things of which they had no true knowledge. The one sort I pass over in silence out of respect, and the other out of charity. What I have to say is, that from so long a train of crosses, with which my life has been filled, one may judge that the greatest were reserved till the last; and that GOD who, through an effect of his goodness, did not reject me, had no mind to leave the end of my life without a greater conformity to JESUS CHRIST. He was arraigned before all sorts of tribunals. He has done me the favour to be so too. He suffered the most violent outrages without complaining. He has conferred on me the mercy of doing the same. How could I do otherwise in the view
he

he gave me of his love and his goodness? In this resemblance of my Saviour, I regarded as favours what the world looks upon as strange persecutions. The peace and joy I had within hindered me from seeing the most violent persecutors, otherwise than as instruments of the justice of GOD, which has ever been to me so adorable and so amiable. I was then in prison as in a place of delight and refreshment, this general privation of all creatures giving me more room to be alone with GOD. Thus I regarded all those great apparent evils, and that universal decry, as the greatest of all benefits. I looked upon it as the work of the hand of GOD, who was pleased to *cover his tabernacle with the skins of beasts*, to hide it from the eyes of those to whom he would not have it manifested.

I HAVE borne long and sore languishings, oppressive and painful maladies without relief. I have been also inwardly under great desolations for several months, in such sort that I could only say these words, "My GOD, My GOD, why hast thou forsaken me?" All creatures seemed to be against me. I then put myself on the side of GOD, and of the creatures, against myself. How could I complain of what I suffered, with a love so clear from all self-interest? Should I now interest myself for myself, after having made so entire a sacrifice of whatever regards this *self*? No. I therefore chuse rather to consecrate all those sufferings by silence.

I HAVE defended my innocence with enough of courage and firmness, not to leave any doubt of the falsehood of the calumnies cast on persons whose prayer is fervent and love sincere. The speeches of their slanderers are rash, and contrary

trary to every sort of truth and justice : And yet the heart, which loves God, whose conscience reproaches it with nothing, even from hence gains an increase of strength and of happiness. Persecution is a weight which always sinks and plunges the soul into God. What matters it if all creatures are unchained against that soul, when it is all alone in sweet communion with its God, and gives him solid testimonies of its love? So, since there is no other way of testifying to God that we love him, than in bearing heavy sufferings for his love, we are infinitely indebted to him when he gives us the means of doing it.

PERHAPS some will be surprized at my refusing to give the detail of the greatest and strongest crosses of my life, after I have related those which were less. I thought it proper to tell something of the crosses of my youth, to shew the crucifying conduct which God held over me. I thought myself also obliged to relate certain facts, to manifest their falsehood, the conduct of those by whom they had passed, and the authors of those persecutions of which I have been only the accidental object, as I was only persecuted, in order to involve therein persons of great merit; whom, being out of their reach by themselves, they therefore could not personally attack, but by confounding their affairs with mine. I thought I owed to religion, piety, my friends, my family, and myself.

WHILE I was prisoner at *Vincennes*, and Monsieur *De La Reine* examined me, I passed my time in great peace, content to pass the rest of my life there, if such were the will of God. I sang songs of joy, which the maid who served me learned by heart, as fast as I made them : And
we

we together sang thy praises, oh my GOD! The stones of my prison looked in my eyes like rubies. I esteemed them more than all the gaudy brilliancies of a vain world. My heart was full of that joy which thou givest to them who love thee, in the midst of their greatest crosses.

THIS peace was wounded for a short space, by an infidelity which I fell into. It was in premeditating one day on what answers I should make at an examination which was to be the next day. I answered badly. GOD, who had so often caused me to answer difficult and perplexed questions, with much facility and presence of mind, punished me now, even by stopping me short on easy matters with confusion. It served to shew me the inutility of our arguments on such occasions, and the safety of trusting in GOD. They who depend on human reason say, "it is necessary to look before us, and to make our preparations; that it is to tempt GOD, and expect miracles to act otherwise." I leave others to think what they will. As to me I find no safety but in resigning myself to GOD. All scripture abounds with texts enforcing such a resignation.

WHEN things were carried to the greatest extremities, being then in the *Bastile*, I said to thee, "oh my GOD, if thou art pleased to render me a new *spectacle to men and angels*, thy holy will be done! All I ask is that thou wilt save thine, so that neither *principalities, nor powers, nor the sword, may ever separate them from the pure love in JESUS CHRIST*. As for me, what matters it what men think of me, or make me suffer, since they cannot separate me from thee? Were I to please all men and displease thee, wretched would be the consequence. Let all men

H h h

" then

“ then despise and hate me, so I may but be agreeable to thee. Their strokes will polish what may be defective in me, that I may be presented to him for whom I die daily.” I saw all men united as it were to surprize and to torment me, all the subtilty of wit employed for it, by people who had abundance of it; and poor me alone without succour, sometimes also feeling the heavy hand of GOD upon me, who seemed to abandon me to myself, and to my own obscurity; all my own vivacity having been so long mortified, having laboured all my life long to submit myself to JESUS CHRIST, and my reason to his conduct. I voluntarily underwent, as long as my health permitted it, very rigorous fastings and austere penances: But all this looked only like the burning of straw. One moment of the exercises of GOD is of a thousand times more efficacy *than all that we can inflict* upon ourselves.

[BEFORE I enter on her conclusive Chapter, it may be proper to exhibit a view of her poetry.

IN her long imprisonment, she composed, as she has informed us, many Hymns; with Poems on all sorts of Spiritual Subjects, filling five octavo volumes. Her poetic vein was free, flowing with warm devotion and gratitude. Specimens thereof have already been exhibited in several Translations, but in a manner inadequate both to the subject and to her compositions.]

CANTIQUE

M. GUION'S POEMS.

CANTIQUE I.

I.
GREAT God here at
 ease,
 Thee singly to please.

I sing all the length of
 the day;
 Shut up in a cage,
 Yet shelter'd from rage:
 Oh listen and smile on
 the lay!

II.
 From sorrow releas'd,
 With solace increas'd,
 The bars of my prison
 I love:
 All toil here untry'd,
 All wants well supply'd,
 I am blest and enrich'd
 from above.

III.
 What if aliens are prone
 To despise as unknown,
 A language in heav'n
 understood;
 'Tis a feast to the taste
 Of the soul that is chaste,
 As it flows from the
 fountain of good.

IV.
 Tho' my foes have com-
 bin'd,
 And my body confin'd,
 Yet my soul is with li-
 berty blest:

I am humbly content,
 With whatever is sent,
 For I know that thy
 pleasure is best.

V.
 O pleasure divine,
 All excellence thine;
 And thee will I love and
 adore:
 The more piercing my pain
 The more freedom I gain,
 And of every choice bles-
 sing the more.

VI.
 Accept then, I pray,
 The tribute I pay.
 I sing as a bird full of joy,
 Vivacious, expos'd,
 In a cage when inclos'd,
 His warbling effusions
 employ.

VII.
 Grant my hymns utter'd
 here,
 Melodious to hear,
 Tho' tend'rer and softer
 than fine:
 And the strength ever deign
 Of my life to sustain,
 Of that durable life
 which is thine.

VIII.
 Thy wondrous defence
 Makes a cell seem immense,
 It

It sheds so peculiar a grace
Such a pleasure abounds,
Such a glory surrounds,
And the joys of thy king-
dom embrace.

IX.

All my foes I behold,
All the stout and the bold,
Perplexing their hearts
with their pain;
Confounded.—I see,
While happily free,
How they vent all their
furies in vain!

CONTIQUE II.

Addressed to her Dungeon.

I.

O LOV'D solitude,
Where happiness
greet;—
And nothing that's rude
Embitters her sweets;
Where all the long day
Is a banquet divine!
Can torments allay
Such affection as mine?

II.

No, welcome to love,
My pains are delights:
No torture can move,
No terror affrights.
Let 'em smite with a spear,
Or pierce with a dart,
The worst they can rear
The wish of my heart.

III.

Immur'd in a fort,
My sole exercise,
While without a support,
Is my love and my sighs:
For meekness in harms
My glory will prove;
And Sovereign Charms
Should have Sovereign
love.

IV.

Let me faithful endure,
As my sufferings, I find,
The pleasure procure,
Which reigns in my mind
As God, from on high,
Changes what would an-
noy;
And deigns to supply
Strength, patience and
joy.

CANTIQUE III.

I.

MY dearest Protector, sees how they detain
My life in a dungeon; Yet let me remain
While such is thy pleasure: For better no doubt
In a *prison* with thee than a *palace* without!

II.

No thought in my heart dare, to lift up its head,
But the thought which to love and to serve thee is led.

III.

I wish'd to be thine from my tenderest age:
No lovers beside have I sought to engage,

No

No slender supports of the loftiest reeds,
No trust in their words, and no hope in their deeds.

IV.

In every probation to thee the recourse
Of my soul, in thy grace is its only resource.
What else can I do, so surrounded with foes,
But fly to thy goodness which heals all my woes?

V.

When my hair shall grow white, and infirmity shake
This old shatter'd fabrick thou wilt not forsake.

VI.

Love perfect and pure goes farther than thought:
None knows, till he proves it, how dear 'twill be bought.
Yet 'tis well worth its price, and a thousand times more,
Since it brings us to Heav'n when our labours are o'er.

THE four following pieces are extracted from many of
her's promiscuously taken. The two first give a brief
review of some of the former part of her life. The
third, of the excellencies of divine love. The fourth
of her universal concern for all mankind.

I.

PERMIT me, my God
For thy bounty be-
stow'd
To render oblations of
praise;
O gracious to grant
The supplies of each want,
And to high resignation
to raise!

II.

To blast with the wind
What malice design'd;
To fill with the fervour
of love;
Its duteous flow,
I joyfully know,
The LORD of my life
will approve.

III.

What slanders and lies
Ran around in disguise,
To make odious the
sound of my name;
And, as far as they durst,
To procure me the worst,
Tho' guiltless of suffer-
ing or shame:

IV.

Till wave upon wave
Threaten'd death and a
grave,
In the fathomless depth
of the flood;
So resolv'd in their will!
They had meant it for ill;
But thy pleasure has
turned it to good.

For

V.

For here, O my God,
What a grateful abode !

An asylum of boundless
delight !

I rejoice in my state,
Tho' my lodging so strait,
Having nothing but thee
in my sight.

VI.

Let the winds roar about ;
Let the storms rage *without*
All *within* is so calm and
serene !

Not a cumbersome care,
Not a trifling affair,
Interrupting the peace
of the scene !

VII.

If events then arise,
Or descend from the skies,
On thee let me singly
depend.

From the wind and the
wave

Thou art *mighty to save*,
And a calm and a sun-
shine to send.

VIII.

Human wisdom and pride,
Fling your glories aside,
Nor seduce with your
sparks in the night,

Ye so slyly deceive,
That men fancy they're
brave,

And refuse to their Au-
thor his right.

IX.

Ye provoke with your
flames
Into furious aims,
Till wrath in confusion
expires.

While favour'd with light,
Which would lead them a-
right,

How they clash in their
erring desires ?

X.

O ye carnally wise,
Who deride and despise
All your sense what im-
mensely transcends !

What in secret is seal'd,
Yet to babes is reveal'd,
No critical wit compre-
hends.

XI.

In time then apply,
This wisdom to buy ;
Your Wills to your Au-
thor's resign.

Be humble and just,
Upright in each trust,
And in mercy and purity
shine.

XII.

Then ineffable gains
Will result from your pains,
And the gates of his
kingdom unbarr'd,
The celestial King,
In his bounty, will bring
To the joys of an endless
reward.

II.

I.

O LOVE ever true,
Ever ancient and new
How thy favours un-
bounded amaze !
How grace from on high,
Like an angel of joy,
All around me thy glory
displays !

*Tia

II.

'Tis the ceaseless delight
Of my soul to recite
The show'rs of thy love
as they flow.
My ALL is in thee ;
And NOTHING to me
Are the charms of the na-
tions below.

III.

Thy presence inspires,
And crowns my desires.
Oh fill all my soul with
thy love !
My Guardian and Guide
When tempted and try'd !
Let our union eternally
move.

IV.

To my soul, to my sight,
All is sweet, all is bright :
For thy pleasure all na-
ture obeys.
Here I trace all thy truth,
From my tenderest youth,
'Thro' the scenes of my
earliest days.

V.

My forces had fail'd,
By sickness assail'd,
Yet health from thy hand
I regain'd.
When weigh'd to the
ground
With crosses around,
Thy hand, still attentive
sustain'd.

VI.

The tempest and tide
With perils have ply'd,
Amid the loud threats
of the seas ;
The heights over floods,
The robbers in woods ;
Yet my heart was un-
mov'd and at ease.

VII.

When of fiends and of foes
Rude legions arose,
Toshock me with direful
dismay ;
Full of faith, void of fear,
I repell'd their career,
'Thro' the force of thy
sovereign sway.

VIII.

What can anger or pride ?
Having thee on my side,
Their efforts abortive re-
bound.
The plots and the schemes
Wild phantoms and dreams
The hearts of their au-
thors they wound.

IX.

How in envy combin'd,
In their errors how blind,
With the tenderest com-
passion I view.
Their labour employ'd,
In thy favour enjoy'd,
My warmest of wishes
pursue.

III.

ON THE EXCELLENCIES OF DIVINE LOVE.

WHEN Affection abounds that is perfect and pure,
No terrors alarm, and no vices allure.
The soul, then exalted, all goodness pursues ;
For honours immortal engross all her views.

Then

Then holding her freedom, her purity bought,
Th' Internals are vex'd at their victim uncaught.

What strains can this perfect affection declare ?
What objects assemble with it to compare ?

'Tis the richest of treasures, the brightest of gems ;
All thrones it outshines, all the word's diadems.

'Tis the noblest of plants, as ascending it shoots
From the true pious heart, full of excellent fruits.

From the smallest of seeds it will rise and will spread
O'er the earth with its boughs, up to Heav'n with its
The storm only touches its rind as it blows ; [head.

For the more it is push'd at the firmer it grows.

So solid and lasting its virtues are seen,

Its fruits ever fine, and its leaves ever green ;

In all ages and climates admir'd and renown'd,

From the love of the Highest they solely redound.

'Tis the first and finest of themes ever known,

All beside it give way—to behold it alone !

On every condition it breathes a content,

With the bless'd recollection of moments well spent.

It sweetens our bitters, it comforts our toil ;

It melts down the mountains, and softens the soil.

It lifts up the vails as it levels the hills,

Throws *loftiness* down, and with *lowliness* fills.

Each image of gold, and each idol of lead,

As they fall to the ground, *lose the hands and the head.*

It strengthens in weakness, in sickness it heals,

And pleasures, rewarding, to sorrows unseals.

It brightens in trials, as gold, when refin'd,

The dross in the furnace when leaving behind.

It baffles all Malice, and balks her intent,

Full happiness flowing where misery was meant !

The Pris'ner, exulting, the wonder proclaims ;

And Martyrs, with songs, in the midst of the flames.

To kindness approaching it opens a door,

Supplying all wants, and enriching the poor ;

The glory of countries, the beauty of towns !

From crosses quite transciant, to permanent crowns,

The coward turns fearless of swords and of seas ;

And mortals, astonish'd works wonders with ease.

Effects of thy goodness, O SOV'REIGN DIVINE !

All the powers in the world are as nothing to thine.

Each rising desire in the *heart* is deny'd,

Which tends from thy kingdom to turn *it* aside.

The

The ready suppression attracts thy regards :
 And sweet are the foretastes of future rewards ;
 The *hundred-fold* promis'd to them who resign
 All the charms they delight in, and chuse to be thine.

Ambition and Av'rice and Envy and Lust,
 An army of Giants, are stretch'd in the dust.
 The mighty GOLIAH's who vaunt on the plain,
 By the hands of thy striplings are speedily slain.
 Proud SELF is *in ashes abas'd, and abborr'd*,
 And only the Maker of all things ador'd.

To thee then adhering, wherever they go,
 With how virtuous ardour thy votaries glow ?
 Tho' rocks in the roads, or tho' desarts are found,
 Harmonious appears the creation around.
 All nature looks chearful, if foul or if fair,
 New fragrance diffusing throughout the mild air.
 The joy that's *within* issues forth in their views,
 And paradise, gracing all objects, renews.

Shou'd we buy it with suffering, and losses of all
The flocks in the field, and the herds in the stall,
 With vollies of slander our characters torn,
 Or fierce persecutions incessantly borne,
 The purchase were cheap, since alone it procures
 A fitness for bliss which for ever endures.

IV.

I.
O MY Sov'reign engage
 Every nation and age
 To lay hold of thy prof-
 fers of aid ;
 The motions of sin
 To stifle within,
 In virtues unspotted ar-
 ray'd !

II.
 Happy change of the times,
 Over ages and climes,
 While o'er 'em thy sun
 daily shines :
 From each crime, and each
 lust,
 Ever pure, ever just,

And ennobled in all their
 designs !

III.
 The fault is not thine,
 If the sinner decline
 To walk in the way that
 is right ;
 So clear thou hast shew'd,
 So courted and woo'd
 His return to the rays of
 thy light !

IV.
 But it grieves to survey
 Such a fatal decay
 Of the life of true Hea-
 venly birth ;

How

How its beauties are soil'd, And thy mercies they
And its fortitude foil'd, thankfully prize.

Wide over the face of
the earth ! IX.

V.

Ah the treacherous joys
Of perishing toys ;

Of treasures a baneful
abuse ;

Like snakes hid in flow'rs,
Or harlot's amours

Which deadly distempers
adduce !

VI.

They plunge into woes,
Which admit no repose,

Where insolent spirits
infest :

Their mirth and their wit,
And their scorning, unfit

To join in the joys of
the blest !

VII.

Who vices refuse,

And rectitude chuse,

Can never repent of their
choice.

True freedom, alone,

True bliss is their own,

Who hearken and fol-
low thy voice.

VIII.

Tho' so high on thy throne,

'Tis thy joy to make known

Thy secrets unseal'd, to
the wise.

In affection divine,

As in action, they shine,

Thy word to fulfil,

To conform to thy will,

The permanent mark of
the mind !

With thee they converse,

And rejoice to rehearse

Thy laws, and thy love
to mankind.

X.

When these meet on high,
In a lovelier sky,

Where their Sov'reign
and Saviour appears ;

All beauties are found,

All pleasures abound,

And his infinite good-
ness endears.

XI.

Their labours all o'er,

Their troubles no more,

Triumphing in lustre
improv'd,

What joys will they know,

From the fountain to flow,

Ever loving, and ever
belov'd !

XII.

Who can cease to admire,
O Sov'reign and Sire,

How thy Greatness and
Goodness unite ?

Then depriv'd of his crown

Busy SELF is throwndown,

When we come to be-
hold things aright.

M. GUION'S Experience of DIVINE
COMMUNION : A POEM

Propheying that the Light of the Gospel should reach
to, and spread in distant Countries, separate Islands,
and other Hemispheres.*

CHRIST TO HIS SPOUSE.

O THOU dear object of my fixt delight,
True to my laws, and beauteous in my sight,
Obsequious, chaste, effervent with the dart
Of pure affection in thy constant heart !

My BRIDE elected ! All THY SELF resign :
For ever faithful to thy bridegroom shine,
As when thy toils, in prior days pursu'd,
No stipend sought, no sordid wish allow'd.

When in the maze of thorny paths I led,
Or on the cliffs where briary thickets bred,
Thy course was dauntless, while it seem'd alone,
And faith undevius from the path unknown.

Pleas'd I beheld thy vigilance and fears,
Reliev'd thy sighs, allay'd thy gushing tears,
Look'd on thy conflicts, heard thy suppliant strain,
And arm'd with patience in the depth of pain.

When death stood threat'ning, still my SPOUSE resign'd
Call'd not my love inconstant or unkind.
Thy loads were pond'rous : I the burden blest,
Tho' fancied distant from thy soul distress.
No placid ease, or gay diversion sought,
None but the succours which my pleasure brought.
With lenient balm I sooth'd each pain and fright,
Within thy bosom, yet without thy sight.

This then thy language, " O my dearest SPOUSE,
" With thee to suffer is the lot I chuse.
" For thee to labour is thy lover's scope :
" Thy smile her only happiness and hope !
" All gems beside it are but void and vain :
" They wound her peace, and tantalize her pain.
" One look of thine (why turn'd away those eyes ?)
" Fills with new raptures, and new life supplies."

I saw thee struggling with incumbent throes,
As to my throne thy pray'r, emergent, rose.

* Perhaps the British Isles, which have been highly favoured, also,
America, and even Greenland, where the Gospel has been faithfully
propagated by some PATIENT LABOURERS from Germany.

No pow'r exterior gave internal rest,
 Or gain'd a seat and sceptre in thy *Breast*.
It softly breath'd, O Witness of my love,
 "Look down auspicious, from the realms above,

"O rock of ages! Nothing here below
 "I crave, enrich'd if thy compassion flow:

When yet *too weak* I saw thy willing mind
 For full refinement, which my grace design'd,
 I call'd, "exert thy double fortitude,

"No baits, delicious to the senses, view'd.
 "For such our league: If thou'lt be wholly mine,
 "Thou must all darlings, and thyself, resign,
 "Cast each warm wish of *all thy bliss* aside,
 "And rest *in mine* completely satisfy'd.
 "Endure with patience. Let no conflicts tire;
 "To see me *glorious* be thy sole desire."

What in such conscious solitude I said,
 Thine ear attended, and thy heart obey'd.
 My cheering voice thy vivid hope advanc'd,
 And the chaste ardour of thy love enhanc'd.
 Unseen, unknown, thou would'st have instant dy'd,
 To give bright pledges of a faithful Bride.
 All beauty's charms in dark oblivion caught,
 All selfish interests in the dust unsought,
 Thou cry'd, "I'm fair if faithful to my LORD,
 "Whose wond'rous favours on his Spouse are stor'd."

At length all murmurs on thy lips decay'd:
 All fell in silent resignation laid.
 Silence profound! It's marv'ulous glow refines,
 And human wit, and wisdom, far outshines.
 All words are worthless, where its beams abound,
 When mutual converse melts without a sound.

Thus in the woods thou past thy pleasing youth,
 Alone enraptur'd with *celestial truth*,
 In reverend stillness heard *my language* there,
 And wish'd no human eloquence to hear.
It wrought its wonders, and thy pangs it heal'd,
 And joyous myst'ries of my realm reveal'd,
 Unveil'd my beauty; with my goodness blest;
 Source of thy toils, and temple of thy rest!

'Twas then thy soul in clearest lustre saw,
 How senses, pamper'd, into bondage draw.
 Thy hands refus'd, whate'er would gratify,
 Their keen demand, superfluous, to supply.

All charms then darken'd which had once been bright,
 As stars all vanish from the solar light.
 Each wish was ONE, as when the lucid rays,
 To one fix'd point collected, hotly blaze.
 Then in new freedom soar'd thy flaming love,
 High on the pinions of the peaceful dove;
 Of these great favours all the grateful fame,
 To distant nations, ardent to proclaim.

HER SOLILOQUY AND ADDRESS.

SUCH salutation, from my Sov'reign Spouse,
 Hail'd in his Bride a boundless love to rouse,
 Of secret Self to drown the sly controul,
 And fix in perfect purity of soul.

No more I wish'd of transient toys to view,
 No more mine audience vain discourses drew.

" Oh grant new pow'rs, *I pray'd*, my Love supreme,
 " For promulgation of the worthiest theme:
 " Nor longer leave my fervour thus confin'd,
 " Since thy refulgence on my soul has shin'd!
 " Thy boundless goodness now my soul surveys,
 " 'Tis lost in wonder, and 'tis fill'd with praise.
 " Rapt with thy beauties and exempt from fear,
 " I must resound 'em, tho' the worst I bear."

Ye sever'd isles, and *Hyperborean* plains
 Whose woods lie fetter'd in their icy chains,
 Whose piercing blasts deprive your dreary glades
 Of the sweet fragrance of the Southern shades,
 To you, tho' distant, in his name I call;
 Oh live devoted to the LORD of All.
 Your gates immortal to his Grace unfold;
 And ye'll exult in blessings yet untold,
 In the high glories of perpetual hills,
 In the sweet solace of celestial rills.

If no repugnance intercept the rays
 Which rise to bless you with the best of days.

All wants redress'd, a brighter sun will glow,
 And endless love in blissful union flow,
 Your heart and hands in generous acts employ,
 And crown your labour with transcendent joy.

Ye stately fabricks in th' enamel'd fields,
 Where *art* improves what lovely *nature* yields;
 Ye beauteous hills for pearly fruits renown'd,
 Ye crowns of vines which deck their summits round,

Ye

Ye wide canals which cost amazing toil,
 Ye streams which murmur o'er the flow'ry soil,
 Oh since your Lords, decoy'd with earthly views,
 Neglect the Giver, and the gifts misuse,
 Since peace fraternal yields to selfish strife,
 And graceful virtue to luxurious life,
 I leave, lamenting, your infected state,
 And waft my words to regions less elate.

Ye then who hold yon *Western* Hemisphere,
 Or whose long darkness ends your frigid year,
 Within your breasts your Author's love inclose,
 To thaw your ice, and melt your chilling snows.
 He courts a refuge in your nations. Chuse
 Him for your LORD; nor offer'd bliss refuse.
 His due reception renders every place
 Fair in his sight and honour'd with his Grace.
 He lifts aloft, and wings to bliss from woe
 A race of rebels in the world below,
 Broke from the bonds of dastard fear and shame,
 By virtue fervent with celestial flame.

Ye fruitless tracts, whose hapless towns are thin,
 Oh, if he shield you from the shafts of sin;
 His perfect goodness if your tribes revere,
 And to his laws, in spotless lives adhere;
 Then all its wildness will the waste forego,
 Then clustering grapes for noxious brambles grow.
 But righteous judgment will at last surprize,
 If mortals, call'd, the gracious call despise.

SOME Short Pieces taken from her Book of Emblems,
 which appear to have been the Productions of her
 younger days. I.

HOW endanger'd was I, when distant from thee,
 When sins had an absolute reign;
 When frantic with joy, from restriction if free,
 I rush'd into sports with the vain!

II.

When idle amusements attracted my heart,
 When I heard, and yet fled, from thy voice;
 Applauding my *folly* for flying apart,
 And blindly pursuing her choice!

III.

I now see it all with a pungent regret;
 Of my rashness I deeply repent.
 Oh deign, I beseech, to forgive and forget,
 To thy will let me fully be bent!

I.

HOW long I resisted a gracious God,
 Who kindly vouchsaf'd to invite !
 Ah rebel I was, well deserving his rod,
 And to sink in the horrors of night.

II.

I submit, I surrender myself to thy will :
 And nothing I hope from my tears.
 Thy righteous sentence let justice fulfil ;
 So my soul be set free from her fears.

III.

Great author of goodness, my heart with thy love
 Has been smitten and felt its delight :
 Then every delay from obedience remove,
 And turn what is wrong all aright.

I.

NO pains I deplore,
 Which are paid to my
 fault ;
 Chastise me yet more,
 To revenge the revolt.

II.

I'm asham'd and I grieve,
 As thy goodness I find
 So swift to relieve,
 To caress me so kind.

III.

Not thy *mercies* alone,
 But thy *justice* I crave,
 What best will atone
 My relapse, to receive :

IV.

Of such a transgression
 How painful the sense !

Will the loudest confession
 Efface its offence ?

V.

Will my shameful condition
 Be heal'd with regret ?
 Will floods of contrition
 E'er cancel the debt ?

VI.

Oh unjust and ingrate !
 Let thy hand be severe
 Let me suffer its weight,
 'Till I'm fixed in thy
 fear.

VII.

Redouble my pain
 So my sins be but lost ;
 I will count it all gain,
 And not care what it
 cost.

I.

O DRAW me, my Spouse, and thy steps I'll pursue ;
 For around thee how every thing blooms !
 How sweet is all nature, how beauteous to view !
 How reviving with od'rous perfumes !

II.

Here the Spouse ~~stopt me short~~, as a novice in love ;
 In such terms, ~~in his turn~~, he reply'd ;
 " Weak lovers cry out for attractions to move :
 " And are false and inconstant when try'd."

There's a shorter, yet worthier, path to be trod,
 A path of the love which is pure :
 Where troubles, or tortures, the lover of God
 Is willing for him to endure :

IV.

No road strew'd with roses expecting to find,
 But a life of resemblance to mine.
 I suffer'd for sinners, to death was resign'd,
 And agonies link'd in a line.

V.

The self-pleasing path be no longer survey'd,
 Nor cherish a hope to rejoice :
 By tracing me here let thy love be display'd
 And then thou wilt merit my choice."

C H A P. XXI. AND LAST.

AS my life has ever been consecrated to the cross, I was no sooner out of prison, and my spirit began to breathe a little, after so many persecutions, but my body was afflicted with all sorts of infirmities. I have had almost continual maladies, which often brought me to the very verge of death.

IN these last times I can hardly speak at all of my dispositions. For my state is become quite simple and without any variations. It is a profound *annihilation*. I find nothing in myself to which I can give a name. All that I know is that God is infinitely holy, righteous, good and happy. I see nothing below myself, nothing more unworthy of his bounties than I am. I acknowledge that God has heaped favours on me, enough to save a world, which I have requited too much with ingratitude. All good is in HIM ; I am a mere *Nothing*. To me every condition seems equal. All is lost in his immensity, like a
 little

little drop of water in the sea. In this divine immensity the soul sees itself no more, but it discerns every object in GOD, without discerning them otherwise than by the feeling of the heart. All is darkness in regard to itself, all is light on the side of GOD, who lets me be ignorant of nothing that is proper, or of real advantage. There is here neither clamour, nor sorrow, nor pain, nor vain pleasure, nor uncertainty; but a perfect peace; not in self, but in GOD: No interest for self, no anxiety, recollection or bustle for self. If any think there is any good in me, they are mistaken, and by such thought do injury to my LORD. All good is in him and for him. The greatest satisfaction I can have is because HE IS WHAT HE IS; and *will be so for ever*. If he save me, it must be gratuitously; for I have neither merit nor desert.

I AM astonished that any should place confidence in such a poor nothing creature as I am. I have sometimes said it. Nevertheless, I answer what they ask without difficulty. My own will and inclinations are vanished. Poverty and nakedness are my portion. Sometimes indeed I could wish to undergo the worst of sufferings, so that souls might be brought thereby to know and love GOD.

I DEARLY love the church: whatever wounds that wounds me. I seek nothing for myself. I study nothing; but there are given me immediately, as occasion requires, the most weighty and powerful words. If I wanted to have them they would escape me, and I could by no means catch or recover them. When I have something to say, if I am interrupted all is lost. I am then like a child from whom his apple is secreted: He looks about for it, but in vain: it is gone.

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which deviates from this principle is fashood. He who speaks the ALL OF GOD AND NOTHING OF THE CREATURE, is in the truth, and the truth dwelleth in him, usurpation and selfishness being banished from him. My Children, receive this instruction from your mother, and it will procure you life. Receive it through her, not as from her, but as of God, and to God. Amen! LORD JESUS CHRIST!

CONCLUSION.

I INTREAT all such as shall read this, not to think hardly of the persons, who through a zeal, perhaps too bitter, have push'd things so far against a woman, and against one so submissive; because, *as Tauleurs says* in his institutions, Chap. xi. "God willing to purify a soul by sufferings, might permit an infinite number of well disposed persons to fall into darkness and blindness toward that soul, in order to prepare this chosen vessel, by the rash bias of their judgments in such a state of ignorance; but that at last, after having purified this vessel, he will take away the veil sooner or later, from their eyes, not treating them with rigour for a fault which they have committed through a hidden conduct of his adorable providence.— I say much more, that sooner would God send an angel from heaven, to refine this chosen vessel through tribulations, than leave it without sufferings." *December, 1709.*

[HERE she left off her own Narrative, though she lived a retired life above seven years after this date. What she had wrote being only done in obedience to the commands of her director. She died the 9th of June, 1717, at Blois, in the seventieth Year of her age.]

A
SHORT AND EASY METHOD
OF
PRAYER.
TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH
OF
MADAM J. M. B. DE LA MOTHE GUION,
BY THOMAS DIGBY BROOKE.

THE TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THE following excellent book was the first essay of the truly pious Madam GUION; it was, quickly after its publication, dispersed through great part of France; and it proved the happy instrument of many conversions. Those who were athirst for righteousness, eagerly imbibed the simple and efficacious precepts it contains; and those who had already made advances in the Divine Life were convinced of the truth of their way, and found ample instructions how to proceed. None who were advocates for genuine piety, could be offended at it; as the most salutary instructions for the attainment of Christian Perfection are enforced, without being blended with such matters of opinion as cause offence.

Through the treatise, it is certain, that there are two fundamental truths taken for granted, namely, **THE FALL**

FALL and THE REDEMPTION: and, indeed, whosoever doth not inwardly feel the former, cannot experience the benefit of the latter; he hath no business with this book, nor even with The Bible; "he is whole, and needeth not a Physician."

Should but a few of my Christian Brethren reap advantage from this attempt to bring to light a treasure that has lain so long hidden and unnoticed, it would be, not only an abundant recompence for any little trouble I may have had in the translation, but also an encouragement to publish some other pieces of this illuminated Author.

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THIS little treatise, conceived in great simplicity, was not originally intended for publication: it was written for a few individuals, who were desirous to love God with their whole heart; some of whom, because of the profit they received in reading the manuscript, wished to obtain copies of it; and, on this account alone, it was committed to the press.

It still remains in its original simplicity, without any censure on the various Divine Leadings of others: and we submit the whole to the judgment of those, who are skilled and experienced in Divine matters; requesting them, however, not to decide, without first entering into the main design of the Author, which is to induce the world to love God, and to serve him with comfort and success, in a simple and easy manner, adapted to those who are unqualified for learned and deep researches, and are, indeed, incapable of any thing but a hearty desire to be truly devoted to God.

An unprejudiced reader may find, hidden under the most common expressions, a secret unction, which will excite him to seek after that Sovereign Good, whom all should wish to enjoy.

In speaking of the attainment of perfection, the word **FACILITY** is used; because God is, indeed, found with facility, when we seek him within ourselves. But, in contradiction to this, some, perhaps, may urge that passage in St. John, "Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me;" (Chap. vii. 34.) this apparent difficulty, however, is removed by another passage, where he, who cannot
contradict

contradict himself, has said to all, "seek and ye shall find." Matt. vii. 7.) It is true, indeed, that he who would seek GOD, and is yet unwilling to forsake his sins, shall not find him, because he seeks not aright; and, therefore, it is added, "Ye shall die in your sins." On the other hand, he, who diligently seeks GOD in his heart, and that he may draw near unto him sincerely forsakes his sin, shall infallibly find him.

A Life of Piety appears so formidable, and The Spirit of Prayer of such difficult attainment, that most persons are discouraged from taking a single step towards it. The difficulties inseparable from all great undertakings, are, indeed, either nobly surmounted, or left to subsist in all their terrors, just as Success is the object of despair or hope. I have, therefore, endeavoured to shew the facility of the method proposed in this treatise, the great advantages to be derived from it, and the certainty of their attainment by those that faithfully persevere. O were we once truly sensible of the Goodness of GOD toward his poor creatures, and of his infinite desire to communicate himself unto them, we should not affright ourselves with ideal monsters, not despair of obtaining that good which He is so earnest to bestow: "He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all; how shall he not, with him, also freely give us all things?" (Rom. vii. 32.) But we want courage and perseverance; we have both, to a high degree, in our temporal concerns, but want them in "the one thing needful." (Luke x. 42.)

If any think, that GOD is not easily to be found in this way of Simple Love and Pure Adherence, let them not, on my testimony, alter their opinion, but rather make trial of it; and their own experience will convince them, that the reality far exceeds all my representations of it.

Beloved reader, peruse this little tract with an humble, sincere and candid spirit, and not with an inclination to cavil and criticise, and you will not fail to reap some degree of profit from it. It was written with a hearty desire that you might wholly devote yourself to GOD; receive it then, with a like desire for your own perfection: for nothing more is intended by it, than to invite the Simple and the Child-like to approach their FATHER, who delights in the humble confidence of his children,
and

and is grieved at the smallest instance of their diffidence or distrust. With a sincere desire, therefore, to forsake sin, seek nothing from the inartificial method here proposed, but **THE LOVE OF GOD** and you shall undoubtedly obtain it

Without setting up our opinions above those of others, we mean only with truth and candour, to declare, from our own experience and the experience of others, the happy effects produced by thus **SIMPLY FOLLOWING OUR LORD**

As this treatise was intended only to instruct in **PRAYER**, there are many things which we respect and esteem, totally omitted, as not immediately relative to our main subject: it is, however, certain, that nothing will be found herein to disgust or offend, provided it be read in the spirit with which it was written; and it is still more certain, that those who in right earnest make trial of the way, will find we have written **THE TRUTH**.

It is **'Thou alone, O HOLY JESUS**, who lovest simplicity and innocence, "and whose delight is to dwell with the children of men." (Prov. viii. 3.) with those who are, indeed, willing to become "Little Children;" it is **'Thou alone**, who canst render this little work salutary! Imprint it then on the hearts of all who read it, and lead them to seek thee within themselves, where **'Thou** reposest as in the manger, waiting to receive proofs of their love, and to give them testimony of thine. Yet alas! they may still lose these unspeakable advantages by their negligence and insensibility! But it belongeth unto **'Thee, O thou INCREASED LOVE! thou SILENT AND ETERNAL WORD!** it belongeth unto **'Thee**, to awaken, attract, and convert; to make **'Thyself** be heard, tasted, and beloved! I know **'Thou** canst do it; and I trust **'Thou** wilt do it by this humble work, which belongeth entirely to **'Thee**, proceedeth wholly from **'Thee**, and tendeth only to **'Thee**! And, O most Gracious and adorable Saviour!

TO THEE BE ALL THE GLORY!

A SHORT

A SHORT AND EASY METHOD

OF

PRAYER.

CHAP. I.

THAT ALL ARE CAPABLE OF PRAYER.

WHAT a dreadful delusion hath prevailed over the greater part of mankind, in supposing that they are not called to a state of prayer ! whereas all are capable of prayer, and are called thereto, as all are called to and are capable of salvation.

PRAYER is the application of the heart to God, and the internal exercise of love. St. Paul hath enjoined us to “ pray without ceasing ;” (1 Thess. v. 17.) and our Lord saith, “ I say unto you all, watch and pray :” (Mar. xiii. 33. 37) and all therefore may, and all ought to practise prayer. I grant that meditation is attainable but by few, for few are capable of it ; and therefore my beloved brethren, who are athirst for salvation, meditative prayer is not the prayer which God requires of you, nor which we would recommend.

LET all pray : we should live by prayer, as we should live by love. “ I counsel you to buy of me gold “ tried in the fire, that ye may be rich ;” (Rev. iii. 8) this is much more easily obtained than we can conceive. “ Come, all ye that are athirst, to these living waters ;” nor lose your precious moments in “ hewing out cisterns that will hold no water.” (John vii. 37. Jerem. ii 13.) Come, ye famishing souls, who find nought whereon to feed ; come and ye shall be fully satisfied ! Come, ye poor afflicted ones, who groan beneath your load of wretchedness and pain, and ye shall find ease and comfort ! Come, ye sick, to your physician, and be not fearful of approaching him, because you are filled with diseases ; expose them to his view, and they shall

be healed ! Children draw near to your Father, and he will embrace you in the arms of love ! Come ye poor stray wandering sheep, return to your shepherd ! Come, sinners, to your Saviour ! Come ye dull ignorant and illiterate, ye who think yourselves the most incapable of prayer ! ye are more peculiarly called and adapted thereto. Let all without exception come, for JESUS CHRIST hath called all. Yet let not those come, who are without a heart ; they are not asked ; for there must be a heart, that there may be love. But who is without a heart ? O come, then, give this heart to GOD ; and here learn how to make the donation. All who are desirous of prayer, may easily pray, enabled by those ordinary graces and gifts of the HOLY SPIRIT which are common to all men

Prayer is the guide to perfection, and the sovereign good ; it delivers us from every vice, and obtains us every virtue ; for the one great means to become perfect, is to walk in the presence of GOD : he himself hath said, “ walk in my presence and be ye perfect.” (Gen xvii. 1.) It is by prayer alone that we are brought into this presence, and maintained in it without interruption.

You must then learn a species of prayer, which may be exercised at all times ; which doth not obstruct outward employments ; and which may be equally practised by princes, kings, prelates, priests and magistrates, soldiers and children, tradesmen, labourers, women and sick persons : It cannot therefore, be the prayer of the head, but of the heart ; not a prayer of the understanding alone, which is so limited in its operations that it can have but one object at one time ; but the prayer of the heart is not interrupted by the exercises of reason : Indeed nothing can interrupt this prayer, but irregular and disordered affections : and when once we have tasted of GOD, and the sweetness of his love, we shall find it impossible to relish ought but himself ?

Nothing is so easily obtained as the possession and enjoyment of GOD, for “ in him we live, move and have “ our being ;” and he is more desirous to give himself into us, than we can be to receive him ; and to seek aright, is easier and more natural to us than breathing. Tho’ you think yourselves ever so stupid, dull incapable of sublime attainments, yet by prayer, you may live in GOD himself with less difficulty or interruption than you
live

live in the vital air. Will it not be highly sinful to neglect prayer? but this I trust you will not, when you have learnt the method, which is exceedingly easy.

CHAP. II.

THE METHOD OF PRAYING.

THERE are two ways of introducing a soul into prayer, which should for some time be pursued; the one is meditation, the other is reading accompanied with meditation.

Meditative reading is the choosing some important practical or speculative truth, always preferring the practical, and proceeding thus: whatever truth you have chosen, read only a small portion of it, endeavouring to taste and digest it, to extract the essence and substance thereof, and proceed no farther while any savour or relish remains in the passage: when this subsides, take up your book again, and proceed as before, seldom reading more than half a page at a time; for it is not the quantity that is read, but the manner of reading, that yields us profit. Those who read fast, reap no more advantage, than a bee would by only skimming over the surface of the flower, instead of waiting to penetrate into it, and extract its sweets. Much reading is rather for scholastic subjects, than divine truths: indeed to receive real profit from spiritual books, we must read as I have described; and I am certain if that method were pursued, we should become gradually habituated to, and more fully disposed for prayer.

Meditation which is the other method, is to be practised at an appropriated season, and not in the time of reading. I believe the best manner of meditating is as follows. When by any act of lively faith, you are placed in the presence of God, recollect some truth wherein there is substance and food: pause gently and sweetly thereon, not to employ the reason, but merely to calm and fix the mind: for you must observe, that your particular exercise should ever be the presence of God; your subject therefore, should rather serve to stay the mind, than exercise the understanding. From this procedure, it will necessarily follow, that the lively faith in a God immediately present in our inmost soul, will produce an eager and vehement pressing inwardly into our-
selves,

selves, and restraining all our senses from wandering abroad : this serves to extricate us speedily from numberless distractions, to remove us far from external objects, and to bring us nigh unto our God, who is only to be found in our inmost centre, which is the Holy of Holies wherein he dwelleth. He hath even promised "to come and make his abode with him that doth his will." (John xiv 23) St Augustine accuses himself of wasting his time, by not having from the first sought God in this manner of prayer.

When we are thus fully introverted, and warmly penetrated throughout with a lively sense of the Divine Presence ; when the senses are all recollected, and withdrawn from the circumference to the centre, and the soul is sweetly and silently employed on the truths we have read, not in reasoning, but in the feeding thereon, and animating the will by affection, rather than fatiguing the understanding by study ; when, I say, the affections are in this state, which, however difficult it may appear at first, is, as I shall hereafter shew, easily attainable ; we must allow them sweetly to repose, and peacefully to drink in that of which they have tasted : for as a person may enjoy the flavour of the finest viand in mastication, yet receive no nourishment therefrom, if he does not cease the action and swallow the food ; so when our affections are enkindled, if we endeavour to stir them up yet more, we extinguish the flame, and the soul is deprived of its nourishment ; we should, therefore, in stillness and repose, with respect, confidence and love, swallow the blessed food of which we have tasted : this method is, indeed, highly necessary ; and will advance the soul better in a short time, than any other in a course of years.

I have mentioned, that our direct and principal exercise should consist in the contemplation of the Divine Presence ; we should be also exceedingly watchful and diligent in recalling our dissipated senses, as the most easy method of overcoming distractions ; for a direct contest and opposition only serves to irritate and augment them ; whereas, by sinking down under a sense and perception of a present God, and by simply turning inwards, we wage insensibly a very advantageous, though indirect war with them.

It

It is proper here to caution beginners against wandering from truth to truth, and from subject to subject: the right way to penetrate every divine truth, to enjoy its full relish, and to imprint it on the heart, is dwelling on it whilst its savour continues.

Though recollection is difficult in the beginning, from the habit the soul has acquired of being always from home; yet, when by the violence it hath done itself, it becometh a little accustomed to it, it will soon be rendered perfectly easy, and become delightful. Such is the experimental taste, and sense of his Presence, and such the efficacy of those graces, which that God bestows, whose One Will towards his creatures is to communicate himself unto them!

CHAP. III.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THOSE WHO ARE WHOLLY ILLITERATE.

THOSE who have not been learned to read, are not, on that account, excluded from prayer; for the great book which teacheth all things, and which is legible as well internally as externally, is JESUS CHRIST himself.

The method they should practise is this: They should first learn this fundamental rule, that the kingdom of "God is within them," (Luke xvii. 21.) and that it is there only it must be sought.

It is as incumbent on the Clergy to instruct their parishioners in prayer, as in their catechism. It is true they tell them the end of their creation; but should they not give them sufficient instructions how they may attain it? They should be taught to begin by an act of profound adoration and abasement before God; and closing the corporeal eyes, endeavour to open those of the soul: they should then collect themselves inwardly, and by a lively faith in God, as dwelling within them, pierce into the Divine Presence; not suffering the senses to wander abroad, but withholding them as much as may be in due subjection.

They should then repeat "The LORD's Prayer," in their native tongue; pondering a little upon the meaning of the words, and the infinite willingness of that God who dwells within them, to become, indeed, "Their Father." In this state let them pour out their wants before

before him; and when they have pronounced the endearing word, "Father," remain a few moments in a respectful silence, waiting to have the will of this their heavenly Father made manifest unto them. Again beholding themselves in the state of a feeble child, sorely bruised by repeated falls, and defiled in the mire, destitute of strength to keep up, or of power to cleanse himself, they should lay their deplorable situation open to their Father's view in humble confusion; now sighing out a few words of love and plaintive sorrow, and again sinking into profound silence before him. Then continuing The LORD's Prayer, let them beseech this King of Glory to reign in them, yielding to his love the just claim he has over them, and resigning up themselves wholly to his divine government.

If they feel an inclination to peace and silence, let them continue the words of the prayer so long as this sensation holds; and when it subsides go on with the second petition, "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven!" upon which these humble supplicants must beseech God to accomplish in them, and by them, all his will; and must surrender their hearts and freedom into his hands, to be disposed of as he pleaseth. And finding that the best employment of the will is to love, they should desire to love God with all their strength, and implore him for his pure love; but all this sweetly and peacefully: and so of the rest of the prayer, in which the clergy may instruct them. But they should not overburthen themselves with frequent repetitions of set forms, or studied prayers; (Mat. vi. 7.) for the LORD's Prayer once repeated as I have just described, will produce abundant fruit.

At other times they should place themselves as sheep before their shepherd, looking up to him for their true substantial food: "O Divine Shepherd, thou feedest thy flock with thyself, and art indeed, their daily nourishment!" They may also represent unto him the necessities of their families: but all upon this principle, and in this one great view of faith, that "God is within them."

The ideas we form of the Divine Being fall infinitely short of what he is: a lively faith in his presence is sufficient: for we must not form any image of the Deity; though we may of the second person in the ever-blessed

TRINITY

TRINITY, beholding him in the various states of his incarnation, from his birth to his crucifixion, or in some other state or mystery, provided the soul always seeks for those views in its inmost ground or centre. Again, we may look to him as our physician, at present to his healing influence of all our maladies; but always without violence or perturbation; and from time to time with pauses of silence, that being intermingled with the action, the silence may be gradually extended, and our own exertion lessened; till at length by continually yielding to God's operations, they gain the compleat ascendancy, as shall be hereafter explained.

When the Divine Presence is granted us, and we gradually relish silence and repose, this experimental feeling and taste of the presence of God introduces the soul into the second degree of prayer, which, by proceeding in the manner I have described, is attainable as well by the illiterate as the learned: some favoured souls indeed are indulged with it, even from the beginning.

CHAP. IV.

OF THE SECOND DEGREE OF PRAYER.

SOME call the second degree of prayer, "The prayer of contemplation," The "Prayer of faith and stillness;" and others call it, "The prayer of simplicity." I shall here use this latter appellation, as being more just than any of the former, which imply a much more exalted state of prayer than that I am now treating of.

When the soul has been for some time exercised in the way I have mentioned, she finds that she is gradually enabled to approach God with facility; that recollection is attended with much less difficulty; and that prayer becomes easy, sweet and delightful: she knows that this is the true way of finding God; and she feels "his name is as ointment poured forth." (Cant. i....3.) But the method must now be altered, and that which I prescribe, followed with courage and fidelity, without being disturbed at the difficulties we may encounter therein.

First, as soon as the soul by faith places herself in "The presence of God," and becomes recollected be-
for

fore him, let her remain thus for a little time in a profound and respectful silence.

But if, at the beginning, in forming her act of faith she feels some little pleasing sense of the Divine Presence; let her remain there without being troubled for a subject, and proceed no farther, but carefully cherish this sensation while it continues: as soon as it abates, she may excite the will by some tender affection; and if by the first moving thereof, she finds herself reinstated in her sweet peace, let her there remain: the smothered fire must be gently fanned, but as soon as it is kindled, we must cease that effort, lest we extinguish it by our own activity. I would warmly recommend it to all, never to finish prayer, without remaining some little time after in a respectful silence. It is also of the greatest importance, for the soul to go to prayer with courage; and such a pure and disinterested love, as seeks nothing from God, but the ability to please him, and to do his will: for a servant who only proportions his diligence to his hope of reward, renders himself unworthy of all reward. Go then to prayer, not that ye may enjoy spiritual delights, but that ye may be either full or empty, just as it pleaseth God: this will preserve you in an evenness of spirit, in disquisition as well as in consolation, and prevent your being surprized at aridity or the apparent repulses of God.

CHAP. V.

OF SPIRITUAL ARIDITY.

THOUGH GOD hath no other desire than to impart himself to the loving soul that seeks him, yet he frequently conceals himself from her, that she may be roused from sloth, and impelled to seek him with fidelity and love. But with what abundant goodness doth he recompence the faithfulness of his beloved? And how sweetly are these apparent withdrawals of himself succeeded by the consoling caresses of love? At these seasons, we are apt to believe, either that it proves our fidelity, and evinces a greater ardour of affection, to seek him by an exertion of our own strength and activity; or that this exertion will induce him the more speedily to revisit us. No, no, my dear souls, believe me, this is not the right procedure in this degree of prayer; with patient love, with self abasement and humiliation,
with

with the reiterated breathings of an ardent but peaceful affection, and with silence full of the most profound respect, you must wait the return of the Beloved: thus only you will demonstrate, that it is himself alone, and his good pleasure, that you seek: and not the selfish delights of your own sensations. Hence it is said, (Eccles. ii. 2. 3.) "Be not impatient in the time of dryness and obscurity; suffer the suspensions and delays of the consolations of God; cleave unto him, and wait upon him patiently, that thy life may increase and be renewed."

Be ye, therefore, patient in prayer, though, during life, you can do nought else, than wait the return of the Beloved, in deep humiliation, calm contentment, and patient resignation to his will. And yet how this most excellent prayer may be intermingled with the sighings of plaintive love! This conduct indeed, is most pleasing to the heart of JESUS; and, above all others, will, as it were, compel him to return.

CHAP. VI.

OF ABANDONMENT, OR RESIGNATION.

IT is now we should begin to abandon and give up our whole existence unto God, from the strong and positive conviction, that the occurrence of every moment is agreeable to his immediate will and permission, and just such as our state requires. This conviction will make us resigned in all things; and accept of all that happens, not as from the creature, but as from God himself.

But I conjure you, my dearly beloved, who sincerely wish to give up yourselves to God, that after you have made the donation, you will not snatch yourself back again: remember, a gift once presented, is no longer at the disposal of the donor.

Abandonment is a matter of the greatest importance in our process; it is the key to the inner court; so that whosoever knoweth truly how to abandon himself, soon becomes perfect: we must, therefore, continue steadfast and immoveable therein; nor listen to the voice of natural reason. Great faith produces great abandonment: we must confide in God, "hoping against hope." (Rom. iv. 18.)

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Abandonment

Abandonment is the casting off all selfish care, that we may be altogether at the Divine Disposal. All Christians are exhorted to this resignation; for it is said to all, "Be not anxious for to-morrow; for your Heavenly Father knoweth all that is necessary for you." (Matt. xx. 25.) "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." (Prov. iii. 6.) "Commit thy ways unto the LORD and thy thoughts shall be established." (Prov. xvi. 3.) "Commit thy ways unto the LORD, and he himself will bring it to pass." (Psalm. xxxvi. 5.)

Our abandonment then should be as fully applied to external as internal things, giving up all our concerns into the hands of God, forgetting ourselves, and thinking only of him; by which the heart will remain always disengaged, free, and at peace. It is practised by continually losing our own will in the will of God; by renouncing every particular inclination as soon as it arises, however good it may appear, that we may stand in indifference with respect to ourselves, and only will that which God from eternity had willed; by being resigned in all things, whether for soul or body, whether for time or eternity; by leaving what is past in oblivion; what is to come to Providence, and devoting the present moment to God, which brings with itself God's eternal order, and is as infallible a declaration to us of his will as it is inevitable and common to all; by attributing nothing that befalls us to the creature, but regarding all things in God, and looking upon all, excepting only our sins, as infallibly proceeding from him. Surrender yourselves then to be led and disposed of just as God pleaseth, with respect both to your outward and inward state.

CHAP. VII.

OF SUFFERINGS.

BE ye patient under all the sufferings which God is pleased to send you: if your love to him be pure; you will not seek him less on Calvary, than on Tabor; and, surely, he should be as much loved on that as on this, since it was on Calvary, he made the greater display of his own love for you.

Be not like those, who give themselves to him at one season, and withdraw from him at another: they give them-

themselves only to be caressed: and wrest themselves back again, when they come to be crucified, or at least turn for consolasion to the creature.

No, beloved souls, ye will not find consolation in ought but in the love of the Cross, and in total abandonment; "Who savoureth not the Cross, sayoureth not the things that be of God." (Matt. xvi. 23.) It is impossible to love God without loving the Cross; and a heart that savours the Cross, finds the bitterest things to be sweet; "A famished soul findeth bitter things sweet:" (Job. vi. 1.) because she findeth herself an hungered for her God, in proportion as she findeth herself an hungered for the Cross. God giveth the Cross, and the Cross giveth us God.

We may be assured, that there is an internal advancement, where there is an advancement in the way of the Cross: Abandonment and the Cross go hand in hand together.

As soon as any thing presents itself, as a suffering, and you feel a repugnance against it, resign yourself immediately unto God with respect to it, and give yourself up to him in sacrifice; you shall find, that, when the Cross arrives, it will not be so very burthensome, because you had disposed yourself to a willing reception of it. This, however, does not prevent you from feeling its weight as some have imagined: for when we do not feel the Cross, we do not suffer it. A sensibility of sufferings constitutes a principal part of the sufferings themselves. JESUS CHRIST himself was willing to suffer its utmost rigours. We often bear the Cross in weakness, at other times in strength: all should be equal to us in the will of God.

CHAP. VIII.

OF MYSTERIES.

IT may be objected, that by this method, we shall have no mysteries imprinted on our minds: but it is quite the reverse; for it is the peculiar means of imparting them to the soul. JESUS CHRIST, to whom we are abandoned, and whom, "we follow as the way, whom we hear as the truth, and who animates us as the life," (John xiv. 6.) in imprinting himself on the soul, impresses the characters of his different states; and to bear all

all the states of **JESUS CHRIST**, is far more sublime, than merely to reason concerning them. **St. Paul** bore in his body the states of **JESUS CHRIST**: "I bear in my body," says he, "the marks of the **LORD JESUS**;" (*Gal. vi. 17*) but he does not say that he reasoned thereon.

In our acts of resignation, **JESUS CHRIST** frequently communicates some peculiar views, or revelations of his states: these we should thankfully receive, and dispose ourselves for what appeareth to be his will. Indeed having no other choice, but that of ardently reaching after him, of dwelling ever with him, and of sinking into nothingness before him, we should accept indiscriminately all his dispensations, whether obscurity or illumination, fecundity or barrenness, imbecility or strength, sweetness or bitterness, temptations, distractions, pain, weariness, or doubtings; and none of all these should, for one moment, retard our course. **GOD** engages some, for whole years, in the contemplation and enjoyment of a particular mystery; the simple view or contemplation of which gathers the soul inward, provided it be faithful: but as soon as **GOD** is pleased to withdraw this view from the soul, it should freely yield to the deprivation. Some are very uneasy at seeing their inability to meditate on certain mysteries; but this disquietude hath no just foundation, since an affectionate attachment to **GOD** includes in itself every species of devotion: for whosoever, in repose and quiet is united to **GOD** alone, is, indeed, most excellently and effectually applied to every divine mystery: the love of **GOD** comprehends in itself the love of all that appertains to him.

CHAP. IX.

OF VIRTUE.

IT is thus we acquire virtue, with facility and certainty; for, as **GOD** is the fountain and principle of all virtue, we possess all in the possession of himself; and in proportion as we approach toward his possession, in like proportion do we rise into the most eminent virtues. For all virtue is but as a masque, an outside appearance mutable as our garments, if it doth not spring up, and then indeed it is genuine, essential, and permanent: "The beauty of the King's daughter proceeds from within," saith **David**. (*Psal. xlv. 14.*) These souls above all others practise

practise virtue in the most eminent degree, though they advert not to any particular virtue : God, to whom they are united, carries them to the most extensive practice of it ; he is exceedingly jealous over them, and prohibits them the taste of any pleasure but in himself. What a hungering for sufferings have those souls, who thus glow with divine love ! how prone to precipitate into excessive austerities, were they permitted to pursue their own inclinations ! They think of nought save how they may please their Beloved : as their self-love abates, they neglect and forget themselves ; and as their love to God encreases, so do self-detestation and disregard to the creature. O was this easy method acquired, a method so suited to all, to the dull and ignorant as well as to the accute and learned, how easily would the whole church of God be reformed ! Love only is required : “ Love !” saith St. Austin, “ and then do what you “ please.” For when we truly love, we cannot have so much as a will to any thing that might offend the object of our affections.

CHAP. X.

OF MORTIFICATION.

I WILL even affirm, that, in any other way, it is next to an impossibility to acquire a perfect mortification of the senses and passions. The reason is obvious ; the soul gives vigour and energy to the senses, and the senses raise and stimulate the passions : a dead body has neither sensations, nor passions, because its connection with the soul is dissolved.

All endeavours merely to rectify the exterior, impel the soul yet farther outward into that about which she is so warmly and zealously engaged. It is in these matters, that her powers are diffused and scattered abroad ; for her application being immediately directed to austerities, and other externals, she thus invigorates those very senses she is aiming to subdue. For the senses have no other spring from whence to derive their vigour than the application of the soul to themselves ; the degree of their life and activity is proportioned to the degree of attention which the soul bestows upon them ; and this life of the senses stirs up and provokes the passions, instead of suppressing or subduing them : austerities may, indeed, enfeeble the body, but for the reasons
just

just mentioned, can never take off the keenness of the senses, or lessen their activity. The one only method to effect this, is inward recollection ; by which the soul is turned, wholly and altogether inward, to possess a PRESENT GOD. If she directs all her vigour and energy towards this centre of her being, the simple act separates and withdraws her from the senses ; the exercising all her powers internally, leaves them faint and impotent ; and the nearer she draws to GOD, the farther, is she separated from the senses, and the less are the passions influenced by them.

Hence it is, that those, in whom the attractions of grace are very powerful, find the outward man altogether weak and feeble, and even liable to faintings. I do not mean, by this, to discourage mortification ; for it should ever accompany prayer, according to the strength and state of the person, or as obedience will allow. But I say, that mortification should not be our principal exercise ; nor should we prescribe ourselves such and such austerities, but follow simply and merely the internal attractions of grace ; and being possessed and occupied with the Divine presence (without thinking particularly on mortification) GOD will enable us to perform every species of it ; and most assuredly, he will give no relaxation to those who abide faithful in their abandonment to him, until he has mortified in them every thing that remains to be mortified. We have only then to continue steadfast in the utmost attention to GOD, and all things will be rightly performed. All are not capable of outward austerities, but all are capable of this. In the mortification of the eye and ear, which continually supply the busy imagination with new subjects, there is little danger of falling into excess ; but GOD will teach us this also, and we have only to follow where his spirit guides.

The soul has a double advantage by proceeding thus : for, in withdrawing from outward objects, she draws the nearer to GOD ; and in approaching him, besides the secret sustaining and preserving power and virtue she receives, she is farther removed from sin, the nearer her approaches are made ; so that conversing becomes habitual.

CHAP.

CHAP. XL

OF CONVERSION.

BE ye truly converted unto that God from whom "ye have so deeply revolted." (Isa. xxxi. 6.) To be truly converted is to avert wholly from the creature, and turn wholly unto God.

For the attainment of salvation, it is absolutely necessary, that we should forsake outward sin, and turn unto righteousness : but this alone is not perfect conversion, which consists in a total change of the whole man from an outward to an inward life.

When the soul is once turned to God, she finds a wonderful facility in continuing stedfast in her conversion ; and the longer she remains thus converted, the nearer she approaches, and the more firmly she adheres to God ; and the nearer she draws to him, of necessity she is the farther removed from the creature, which is so contrary to him : so that she is so effectually established and rooted in her conversion, that it becomes habitual, and as it were natural to her. Now we must not suppose, that this is effected by a violent exertion of her own powers ; for she is not capable of, nor should she attempt any other co-operation with Divine Grace, than that of endeavouring to withdraw herself, from external objects, and to turn inwards : after which she has nothing farther to do, than to continue stedfast in her adherence to God.

God has an attractive virtue which draws the soul more and more powerfully to himself, the nearer she approaches towards him, and in attracting, he purifies and refines her ; just as it is with a gross vapour exhaled by the sun, which, as it gradually ascends, is rarified and rendered pure : the vapour indeed, contributes to its exhalation only by its passiveness ; but the soul co-operates with the attractions of her God, by a free and affectionate correspondence. This kind of introversion is both easy and efficacious, advancing the soul naturally, and without constraint, because God himself is her centre,

Every centre has a powerful attractive virtue ; and the more pure and exalted it is, the stronger and more irresistible are its attractions. But besides the potent magnetism

magnetism of the centre itself, there is, in every creature, a correspondent tendency to re-union with its peculiar centre, which is vigorous and active in proportion to the spirituality and perfection of the subject.

As soon as any thing is turned towards its centre, its own gravitation instigates and accelerates it thereto, unless it be withheld by some invincible obstacle : a stone held in the hand is no sooner disengaged, than by its own weight it falls to the earth as to its centre ; so also water and fire, when un-obstructed, tend and flow incessantly to their principle or centre. Now when the soul, by its efforts to abandon outward objects, and gather herself inwards, is brought into the influence of the central tendency ; without any other exertion, she falls gradually by the weight of Divine Love, into her proper centre ; and the more passive and tranquil she remains, and the freer from self-motion and self-exertion, the more rapidly she advances, because the energy of the central attractive virtue is un-obstructed, and has full liberty for action.

All our care and attention should, therefore, be to acquire inward recollection : nor let us be discouraged by the pains and difficulties we encounter in this exercise, which will soon be recompensed, on the part of our God, by such abundant supplies of grace, as will render the exercise perfectly easy, provided we be faithful in meekly withdrawing our hearts from outward distractions and occupations, and returning to our centre, with affections full of tenderness and serenity. When at any time the passions are turbulent, a gentle retreat inwards unto a present God, easily deadens and pacifies them ; and any other way of contending with them, rather irritates than appeases them.

CHAP. XII.

OF THE PRAYER OF THE SIMPLE PRESENCE OF GOD.

THE soul that is faithful in the exercise of love and adherence to God above described, is astonished to feel him gradually taking possession of her whole being ; she now enjoys a continual sense of that Presence, which is become as it were natural to her ; and this, as well as prayer, is the result of habit. She feels an unusual serenity gradually diffusing itself throughout all

all her faculties ; and silence now wholly constitutes her prayer ; whilst God communicates an infused love, which is the beginning of ineffable blessedness. O that I were permitted to pursue this subject, and describe some degrees of the endless progression of subsequent states ! But I now write only for beginners ; and shall, therefore, proceed no farther, but wait our LORD's time for publishing what may be applicable to every conceivable degree of " stature in CHRIST JESUS."

We must, however, urge it as a matter of the highest import, to cease from self-action and self-exertion, that God himself may act alone : he saith by the mouth of his Prophet David, " Be still and know that I am God." (Ps. xlv. 10.) But the creature is so infatuated with a love and attachment to its own working, that it doth not perceive and distinguish all its operations. She is ignorant that her inability minutely to observe the manner of her motion, is occasioned by the swiftness of her progress ; and that the operations of God, in extending and diffusing their influence, absorb those of the creature. The stars may be seen distinctly before the sun rises ; but as his light advances, their rays are gradually absorbed by his ; and they become invisible, not from the want of light in themselves, but from the superior effulgence of their chief luminary.

The case is similar here ; for there is a strong and universal light which absorbs all the little distinct lights of the soul ; they grow faint and disappear under its powerful influence, and self-activity is now no longer distinguishable : yet those greatly err, who accuse this prayer of idleness, a charge that can only arise from inexperience. If they would but make some efforts towards the attainment of this prayer, they would soon experience the contrary of what they suppose, and find their accusation groundless.

This appearance of inaction is, indeed, not the consequence of sterility and want, but of fruitfulness and abundance ; which will be clearly perceived by the experienced soul, who will know and feel, that her silence is full and unctuous, and the result of causes totally the reverse of apathy and barrenness. There are two kinds of people that keep silence ; the one because they have nothing to say, the other because they have too much : it is so with the soul in this state ; her silence is

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occasioned by the super-abundance of matter, too great for utterance.

To be drowned, and to die of thirst, are deaths widely different; yet water may, in some sense, be said to cause both; abundance destroys in one case, and want in the other. So in this state the abundance and overflowing of grace still the activity of self; and therefore, it is of the utmost importance to remain as silent as possible.

The infant hanging at the mother's breast, is a lively illustration of our subject: it begins to draw the milk, by moving its little lips; but when the milk flows abundantly, it is content to swallow, and suspend its suction; by doing otherwise, it would only hurt itself, spill the milk, and be obliged to quit the breast.

We must act in like manner in the beginning of Prayer, by exerting the lip of the affections; but as soon as the milk of Divine Grace flows freely, we have nothing to do, but, in repose and stillness, sweetly to imbibe it; and when it ceases to flow, we must again stir up the affections as the infant moves its lips. Whoever acts otherwise, cannot turn this grace to advantage; which is bestowed, to allure and draw the soul into the repose of Love, and not into the multiplicity of Self.

But what becometh of this child, who gently and without motion drinketh in the milk? Who could believe that it can thus receive nourishment? Yet the more peacefully it feeds, the better it thrives. What, I say, becomes of this infant? It drops gently asleep on its mother's bosom. So the soul that is tranquil and peaceful in prayer, sinketh frequently into a mystic slumber, wherein all her powers are at rest; till at length she is wholly fitted for that state, of which she enjoys these transient anticipations. In this process the soul is led naturally, without effort, art or study.

The interior is not a strong hold, to be taken by storm and violence; but a kingdom of peace, which is to be gained only by Love.

If any will thus pursue the little path I have pointed out, it will lead them to infused prayer. God demands nothing extraordinary nor difficult; on the contrary, he is best pleased by a simple and child-like conduct.

That which is most sublime and elevated in religion, is the easiest attained: the most necessary sacraments
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are the least difficult. It is thus also in natural things : if you would go to sea, embark on a river, and you will be conveyed to it insensibly and without exertion. Would you go to GOD, follow this sweet and simple path, and you will arrive at the desired object, with an ease and expedition that will amaze you. O that you would but once make the trial ! how soon would you find that all I have advanced falls short of the reality, and that your own experience will carry you infinitely beyond it ! Is it fear that prevents you from instantly casting yourself into those arms of LOVE, which were widely extended on the Cross only to receive you ? Whence can your fears arise ? What risque do you run, in depending solely on your GOD, and abandoning yourself wholly unto him ? Ah ! he will not deceive you, unless by bestowing an abundance beyond your highest hopes : but those who expect all from themselves, will inevitably be deceived, and must suffer this rebuke of GOD by his prophet Isaiah, “ Ye have wearied yourselves in the “ multiplicity of your ways, and have not said, let us “ rest in peace.” (Isa. lvii. 10. vulgate.)

CHAP. XIII.

OF REST BEFORE GOD.

THE soul advanced thus far, hath no need of any other preparative than its quietude : for now the Presence of GOD, which is the great effect, or rather continuation of Prayer, begins to be infused, and almost without intermission. The soul certainly enjoys transcendent blessedness, and feels that “ it is no longer she “ that lives, but CHRIST that liveth in her ;” and that the only way to find him is introversion. She no sooner closeth her bodily eyes than she is wrapt up in Prayer : she is amazed at so great a blessing, and enjoys an internal converse, which external matters cannot interrupt. The same may be said of this species of prayer, that is said of wisdom : “ all good things come together with “ her.” (Wisdom vii. 11.) For the virtues flow from this soul into exertion with so much sweetness and facility, that they appear natural and spontaneous : and the living spring within breaks forth so freely and abundantly
into

into all goodness, that she becomes even insensible to evil. Let her then remain faithful in this state ; and be aware of choosing or seeking any other disposition whatsoever than this simple Rest, as a preparative either to confession or communion, to action or prayer : for her sole business is to expand herself for the full reception of the Divine infusions. I would not be understood to speak of the preparations necessary for the sacraments, but of the most perfect dispositions in which they can be received.

CHAP. XIV.

OF INTERNAL SILENCE.

THE Lord is in his Holy Temple, let all the earth “ keep silence before him.” (Hab. ii. 20.) Inward silence is absolutely indispensable, because THE WORD is essential and eternal, and necessarily requires dispositions in the soul in some degree correspondent to his nature, as a capacity for the reception of himself. Hearing is a sense formed to receive sounds, and is rather passive than active, admitting, but not communicating sensation ; and if we would hear, we must lend the ear for that purpose : so CHRIST THE ETERNAL WORD, without whose Divine inspeaking the soul is dead, dark and barren, when he would speak within us, requires the most silent attention to his all-quickenings and efficacious voice.

Hence it is so frequently enjoined us in Sacred Writ, to hear and be attentive to the voice of GOD : of the numerous exhortations to this effect, I shall quote a few : “ Hearken unto me, my people, and give ear unto me, “ O my nation !” (Isa. li. 4.) and again, “ Hear me, all “ ye whom I carry in my bosom, and bear within my “ bowels :” (Isa. xlvi. 3.) and farther by the Psalmist, “ Hearken, O daughter ! and consider, and incline thine “ ear ; forget also thine own people, and thy father’s “ house ; so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty.” (Psal. xlv. 10, 11.)

We should forget ourselves, and all self-interest, and listen and be attentive to the voice of our GOD : and these two simple actions, or rather passive dispositions, attract his love to that beauty, which he himself communicates.

municates. Outward silence is very requisite for the cultivation and improvement of inward ; and, indeed, it is impossible we should become truly internal, without the love and practice of outward silence and retirement. God saith, by the mouth of his prophet, " I will lead " her into solitude, and there will I speak to her heart : " (Hos. ii. 14. vulg.) and unquestionably the being internally engaged with God, is wholly incompatible with being busied, and employed in the numerous trifles that surround us. (Luke xxxviii. 42.)

When through imbecility or unfaithfulness we become dissipated, or as it were un-centered, it is of immediate importance to turn again gently and sweetly inward ; and thus we may learn to preserve the spirit and unction of prayer, throughout the day ; for if prayer and recollection were wholly confined to any appointed half-hour, or hour, we should reap but little fruit,

CHAP. XV.

OF CONFESSION AND SELF-EXAMINATION.

SELF-EXAMINATION should always precede confession, and in the nature and manner of it should be conformable to the state of the soul : the business of those that are advanced to the degree of which we now treat, is to lay their whole souls open before God, who will not fail to enlighten them, and enable them to see the peculiar nature of their faults. This examination, however, should be peaceful and tranquil ; and we should depend on God for the discovery and knowledge of our sins, rather than on the diligence of our own scrutiny.

When we examine with constraint, and in the strength of our own endeavours, we are easily deceived and betrayed by self-love into error ; " we believe the evil " good, and the good evil : " (Isa. v. 20.) but when we lie in full exposure before the Sun of Righteousness, his Divine beams render the smallest atoms visible. It follows from hence, that we must forsake self, and abandon our souls to God, as well in examination as confession.

When souls have attained to this species of prayer, no fault escapes reprehension ; on every commission, they are instantly rebuked by an inward burning and tender confusion (

confusion ! such is the scrutiny of him who suffers no evil to be concealed; and under its purifying influence, the one way is to turn affectionately to our judge, and bear with meekness the pain and correction he inflicts. He becomes the incessant examiner of the soul; she can now indeed, no longer examine herself; and if she be faithful in her resignation, experience will convince her, that she is a thousand times more effectually examined by his Divine Light, than by her own most active and vigorous inspection.

* Those who tread these paths should be informed of a matter respecting their confession, in which they are apt to err. When they begin to give an account of their sins, instead of the regret and contrition they had been accustomed to feel, they find that love and tranquillity sweetly pervade and take possession of their souls: now those who are not properly instructed, are desirous of withdrawing from this sensation, to form an act of contrition; because they have heard, and with truth, that it is requisite: but they are not aware, that they lose thereby the genuine contrition, which is this Infused Love, infinitely surpassing any effect produced by self-exertion, and comprehending the other acts in itself as in one principal act, in much higher perfection, than if they were distinctly perceived, and varied in their sensation. Be not then troubled about other things, when God acts so excellently in you and for you.

To hate sin in this manner, is to hate it as God does. The purest love is that which is of his immediate operation in the soul: why should she then be so eager for action? Let her remain in the state he assigns it, agreeably to the instructions of Solomon: "Put your confidence in God; remain in quiet where he hath placed you." (Eccles. xi. 22.)

The soul will also be amazed at finding a difficulty in calling her faults to remembrance: this, however, should cause no uneasiness; first, because this forgetfulness of our faults is some proof of our purification from them; and in this degree of advancement it is best: secondly,
because,

* Though this instruction relates immediately to the customs of the Romish Church, it is however very applicable to Enlightened Souls on their approaching the LORD'S TABLE, and at other seasons of solemn confession.

because, when confession is our duty, GOD will not fail to make known to us our greatest faults ; for then he himself examines ; and the soul will feel the end of examination more perfectly accomplished, than if it could possibly have been by the utmost exertion of our own endeavours.

These instructions, however, would be altogether unsuitable to the preceding degrees, while the soul continues in her active state ; wherein it is right and necessary she should in all things use her utmost industry, in proportion to the degree of her advancement. it is those that have arrived to this more advanced state, whom I would exhort to follow these instructions, and not to vary their one simple occupation even on approaching the communion ; they should remain in silence, and suffer GOD to act freely and without limitation. Who can better receive the Body and Blood of CHRIST, than he in whom the HOLY SPIRIT is indwelling ?

CHAP. XVI.

OF READING AND VOCAL PRAYER.

IF, while reading, you feel yourself recollected, lay aside the book, and remain in stillness : at all times read but little, and cease to read when you are thus internally attracted.

The soul that is called to a state of inward silence, should not encumber herself with long vocal prayers : whenever she does pray vocally, and finds a difficulty therein, and an attraction to silence, she should not use constraint by persevering, but yield to the internal drawings, unless the repeating such prayers be a matter of obedience. In any other case, it is much better not to be burdened with and tied down to the repetition of set forms, but wholly given up to the leadings of the HOLY SPIRIT ; and herein, indeed, is every species of devotion inclusively fulfilled in a most eminent degree.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

OF PETITIONS.

THE soul should not be surprized, at feeling herself unable to offer up to GOD such petitions, as she had formerly made with freedom and facility ; for now “ the Spirit maketh intercession for her according to the will of GOD, that Spirit which helpeth our infirmities : for we know not what we should pray for as we ought ; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered.” (Rom. viii. 26.) We must co-operate with, and second the designs of GOD, which tend to divest us of all our own operations, that in the place thereof his own may be instituted. Let this then be done in you ; and suffer not yourself to be attached to any thing, however good it may appear ; for it is no longer good, if it in any measure turns you aside from that which GOD willeth of you : the Divine Will is preferable to all things else. Shake off then all attachment to the interests of Self, and live on faith and resignation ; here it is that genuine faith begins truly to operate.

CHAP. XVIII.

OF DEFECTS OR INFIRMITIES.

SHOULD we either wander among externals, or sink into dissipation, or commit a fault, we must instantly turn inwards ; for having departed thereby from our GOD, we should as soon as possible return unto him, and suffer in his presence, whatever sensations he is pleased to impress. On the commission of a fault, it is of great importance to guard against vexation and disquietude, which springs from a secret root of pride, and a love of our own excellence ; we are hurt, by feeling what we are : and if we discourage ourselves or despond, we are the more enfeebled ; and from our reflections on the fault a chagrin arises, which is often worse than the fault itself.

The truly humble soul is not surprized at her defects or failings ; and the more miserable and wretched she beholds

beholds herself, the more doth she abandon herself unto God, and press for a nearer and more intimate alliance with him, that she may avail herself of an eternal strength. We should the rather be induced to act thus, as God himself hath said, "I will make thee understand what thou oughtest to do; I will teach thee the way by which thou shouldst go; and I will have mine eye continually upon thee for a guide." (Psal. xxxii. 8. vulg.)

CHAP. XIX.

OF DISTRACTIONS AND TEMPTATIONS.

A DIRECT contest and struggle with distractions and temptations, rather serves to augment them; and withdraws the soul from that adherence to God, which should ever be her principal occupation. The surest and safest method of conquest, is simply to turn away from the evil, and draw yet nearer and closer to our God: a little child, on perceiving a monster, does not wait to fight with it, and will scarcely turn its eyes toward it; but quickly shrinks into the bosom of its mother, in total confidence of safety: so likewise should the soul turn from the dangers of temptation to her God. "God is in the midst of her," saith the Psalmist, "she shall not be moved; God shall help her, and that right early." (Psal. xli. 5.)

If we do otherwise, and in our weakness attempt to attack our enemies, we shall frequently feel ourselves wounded if not totally defeated; but, by casting ourselves into the simple presence of God, we shall find instant supplies of strength for our support. This was the succour sought for by David: "I have set," saith he, "the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope." (Psal. xvi. 8, 9.) And it is said in Exodus, "The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace."

CHAP. XX.

OF THE PRAYER OF SELF-ANNIHILATION.

SUPPLICATION and sacrifice are comprehended in prayer, which, according to St. John, is "an incense, the smoke whereof ascendeth unto God;" therefore it is said in the Apocalypse, that "unto the Angel was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all Saints." (Chap. viii. 3.)

Prayer is the effusion of the heart in the presence of God: "I have poured out my soul before God," saith the mother of Samuel. (1 Sam. i. 15.) The prayer of the Wise Men at the feet of CHRIST in the stable of Bethlehem, was signified by the incense they offered: for prayer being the energy and fire of Love, melting, dissolving, and sublimating the soul, and causing it to ascend unto God; therefore, as the soul is melted and dissolved, in like proportion do odours issue from it; and these odours proceed from the intense fire of Love within.

This is illustrated in the Canticles (i. 11.) where the Spouse saith, "While the King sitteth on his couch, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof." The couch is the ground or centre of the soul; and when GOD is there, and we know how to dwell with him, and abide in his Presence, the sacred power and influence thereof gradually dissolves the obduration of the soul, and, as it melteth, odours issue forth; hence it is, that the Beloved saith of his spouse, in seeing her soul melt when he spake, "Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness, like pillars of smoke perfumed with myrrh and frankincense?" (Cant. v. 6....and iii. 6.)

Thus doth the soul ascend unto GOD, by giving up Self to the destroying and annihilating power of Divine Love: this, indeed, is a most essential and necessary sacrifice in the Christian religion, and that alone by which we pay true homage to the sovereignty of GOD; as it is written, "The power of the LORD is great, and he is honoured only by the humble." (Eccles. iii. 20.) By the destruction of the existence of Self-hood within us, we truly acknowledge the supreme existence of our GOD; for unless we cease to exist in Self, the Spirit of THE ETERNAL WORD cannot exist in us: now it is
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by the giving up of our own life, that we give place for his coming; and "in dying to ourselves, he himself liveth and abideth in us."

We should, indeed, surrender our whole being unto CHRIST JESUS; and cease to live any longer in ourselves, that he himself may become our life; "that being dead, our life may be hid with CHRIST IN GOD," (Col. iii. 3.) "Pass ye into me," saith GOD, "all ye who earnestly seek after me." (Eccles. xxiv. 16.) But how is it we pass into GOD? We leave and forsake ourselves, that we may be lost in him; and this can be effected only by annihilation, which being the true prayer of adoration, renders unto GOD alone, all "Blessing, honour, glory and power, for ever and ever." (Rev. v. 13.)

This is the prayer of Truth; "It is worshiping GOD in spirit and in truth:" (John iv. 23.) "In spirit," because we enter into the purity of that Spirit which prayeth within us, and are drawn forth and freed from our own carnal and corrupt manner of praying; "In truth," because we are thereby placed in the Truth of THE ALL OF GOD, and THE NOTHING of the creature.

There are but these two truths, THE ALL, and THE NOTHING; every thing else is falsehood. We can pay due honour to the ALL OF GOD, only in our own annihilation; which is no sooner accomplished, than he, who never suffers a void in nature, instantly fills us with himself.

Did we but know the virtues and the blessings which the soul derives from this prayer, we should willingly be employed therein without ceasing. "It is the pearl of great price: it is the hidden treasure," (Matt. xiii. 44, 45.) which, whoever findeth, selleth freely all that he hath to purchase it: "It is the well of living water, which springeth up unto everlasting life:" "It is the adoration of GOD in spirit and in truth:" (John iv. 14....23.) and it is the full performance of the purest evangelical precepts.

JESUS CHRIST assureth us, that the "Kingdom of GOD is within us:" (Luke xvii. 21.) and this is true in two senses: First GOD becometh so fully the Master and LORD in us, that nothing resisteth his dominion; then is our

our interior his kingdom : And again, when we possess God, who is the supreme Good, we possess his kingdom also, wherein there is fullness of joy, and where we attain the end of our creation : thus it is said, " to *act* serve God, is to reign." "The end of our creation, indeed, is to enjoy our God, even in this life; but alas! how few there are who advert to this!

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CHAP. XXI.

THAT WE ACT MORE NOBLY, AND WITH MORE ENERGY,
BY THIS SPECIES OF PRAYER, THAN BY ANY OTHER.

SOME persons, when they hear of the prayer of silence, falsely imagine, that the soul remains stupid, dead and inactive; but, unquestionably, it acteth therein, more nobly and more extensively, than it had ever done before; for God himself is her mover, and she now acteth by the agency of his Spirit. When St. Paul speaks of our being led by THE SPIRIT OF GOD, it is not meant that we should cease from action: but that we should act through the internal agency of his Grace. This is finely represented by the Prophet Ezekiel's vision of the " wheels, which had a Living Spirit; and whithersoever the Spirit was to go, they went; they ascended, and descended as they were moved; for the Spirit of Life was in them, and they returned not when they went." (Ezek. i. chap. 18. verse.) Thus the soul should be equally subservient to the will of that Vivifying Spirit wherewith she is informed, and scrupulously faithful to follow only as that moves. ^ Her motions now never tend to return, in reflection on the creatures or herself; but go forward, in an incessant approach toward her chief end.

This action of the soul is attended with the utmost tranquility. When she acteth of herself the act is forced and constrained; and, therefore, she can the more easily perceive and distinguish it: but when she acteth under the influence of the Spirit of Grace, her action is so free, so easy, and so natural, that it almost seems as if she did not act at all: " He hath set me at large, he hath delivered me, because he delighted in me." Psal. xviii. 19.)

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When the soul hath got into her central tendency, or in other words, is returned through recollection into herself; from that moment the central attraction becomes a most potent action, infinitely surpassing in its energy every other species. Nothing, indeed, can equal the swiftness of this tendency to the centre: and tho' an action, yet it is so noble, so peaceful, so full of tranquillity, so natural, and so spontaneous, that it appears to the soul as if she did not act at all.

When a wheel rolls slowly, we can easily distinguish its parts; but when its motion is rapid, we can distinguish nothing. So the Soul which rests in God, hath an activity exceedingly noble and elevated, yet altogether peaceful: and the more peaceful she is, the swifter is her course; because she is proportionably given up to that Spirit, by which she is moved and directed.

This attracting Spirit is no other than God himself, who, in drawing us, causes us to run unto him. How well did the Spouse understand this, when she said, "Draw me, and we will run after thee." (Cant. i. 3.) Draw me unto thee, O my Divine centre, by the secret springs of my existence, and all my powers and senses shall follow the potent magnetism! This simple attraction is both an ointment to heal, and a perfume to allure: "we follow," saith she, "the fragrance of thy perfumes;" and though so powerfully magnetic it is followed by the soul freely, and without constraint; for it is equally delightful as forcible; and whilst it attracts by its potency, it charms with its sweetness. "Draw me," saith the Spouse, "and we will run after thee." She speaketh of and to herself: "draw me,....behold the unity of the centre which attracteth! "we will run,"—behold the correspondence and course of all the senses and powers, in following that attraction!

Instead then of promoting idleness, we promote the highest activity, by inculcating a total dependence on the Spirit of God, as our moving principle; for it is "in him, and by him alone, that we live and move, and have our being." (Acts xvii. 18.) This meek dependence on the Spirit of God is indispensibly necessary to reinstate the soul in its primeval unity and simplicity, that she may thereby attain the end of her creation. We must, therefore, forsake our multifarious activity, to re-enter

enter the simplicity and unity of God, in whose image we were originally formed. "The Spirit is one and manifold." Wisdom vii. 22.) and his unity doth not preclude his multiplicity. We enter into his unity when we are united unto his Spirit, and have one and the same Spirit with him; and we are multiplied in respect to the outward execution of his will, without any egression from our state of union: so that, when we are wholly moved by the Divine Spirit, which is infinitely active, our activity must, indeed, differ widely in its energy and degree from that which is merely our own.

We must yield ourselves to the guidance of "Wisdom, which is more moving than any motion;" (Wisdom vii. 24.) and by abiding in dependence on its action, our activity will be truly efficient. "All things were made by THE WORD, and without him was not any thing made, that was made." (John i. 3.) God originally formed us in his own likeness; and he now informeth us with the Spirit of his WORD, that, "Breath of Life," (Gen. ii. 7.) which was inbreathed at our creation, in the participation whereof the Image of God consisted; and this life is a Life of Unity, simple, pure, intimate, and always fruitful. The Devil having broken and deformed the Divine Image in the soul, the agency of the same WORD, whose Spirit was inbreathed at our creation, is absolutely necessary for its renovation; and it can only be renewed by our being passive under him who is to renew it: but who can restore the Image of God within us in its primeval form, save he himself who is "the Essential Image of his Father?"

Our activity should, therefore, consist in endeavouring to acquire and maintain such a state, as may be most susceptible of Divine impressions, most flexible to all the operations of the ETERNAL WORD. Whilst a tablet is unsteady, the painter is unable to delineate a true copy: so every act of our own selfish and proper spirit is productive of false and erroneous lineaments; it interrupts the work, and defeats the design of this adorable painter: we must then remain in peace, and move only when he moves us. "JESUS CHRIST hath The Life in himself," (John v. 26.) and he should be the life of every living thing.

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As all action is estimable only in proportion to the dignity of the efficient principle, this action is incontestably more noble than any other. Actions produced by a Divine principle, are Divine; but creaturely actions, however good they appear, are only human, or at best virtuous, even when accompanied by Grace. JESUS CHRIST saith, "he hath The Life in himself." All other beings have only a borrowed life; but THE WORD hath The Life in himself; and being communicative of his nature, he desireth to communicate it to man. We should, therefore, make room for the influx of this Life, which can only be done by the ejection of the Adamical life, the suppression of the activity of Self. This is agreeable to the assertion of St. Paul: "If any man be in CHRIST, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new!" (2 Corin. v. 17.) but this state can be accomplished only by dying to ourselves, and to all our own activity, that the activity of God may be substituted in its stead.

Instead, therefore, of prohibiting activity, we enjoin it; but in absolute dependence on the Spirit of God, that his activity may take place of our own. This can only be effected by the concurrence of the creature; and this concurrence can only be yielded by moderating and restraining our own activity, that the activity of God may gradually gain the ascendancy, and finally absorb all that is ours, as distinguishable from it.

JESUS CHRIST hath exemplified this in the Gospel: Martha did what was right; but because she did it in her own spirit, CHRIST rebuked her. The spirit of man is restless and turbulent; for which reason it does little, though it would appear to do much. "Martha," saith CHRIST, "Thou art careful, and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." (Luke x. 41, 42.) And what was it that Mary had chosen? Repose, tranquillity, and peace. She apparently ceased to act, that the Spirit of CHRIST might act in her; she ceased to live, that CHRIST might be her life. This shows us how necessary it is to renounce ourselves, and all our activity, to follow CHRIST JESUS; and we cannot follow him, without being animated with his Spirit. Now that his Spirit might gain

gain admission in us, it is necessary, that our own proper spirit should be first expelled: "He that is joined unto the LORD," saith St. Paul, "is one Spirit with him;" (1 Cor. vi. 17.) and David said, "It was good for him to draw near unto the LORD, and to put his trust in him;" (Psalm, lxxiii. 28.) this drawing near unto God is the beginning of Union.

Divine Union has its commencement, its progression, and its consummation. It is first an inclination and tendency towards God: when the soul is introverted in the manner before described, it gets within the influence of the central attraction, and acquires an eager desire after Union: on a nearer approach unto God, it adheres to him; and growing stronger and stronger in its adhesion, it finally becomes one; that is, "one spirit with him;" and it is thus the spirit which had wandered and strayed from God, returns again unto its proper source.

Into this process, which is the Divine motion, and the Spirit of JESUS CHRIST, we must necessarily enter. St. Paul saith, "If any man hath not the Spirit of CHRIST, he is none of his;" (Rom. viii. 9.) therefore, to be CHRIST's, we must be filled with his Spirit; and to be filled with his Spirit, we must be emptied of our own. The Apostle, in the same passage, proves the necessity of this Divine influence or motion: "As many," saith he, "as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (Rom. vii. 14.) The Spirit of Divine Filiation is then the Spirit of Divine action or motion: he, therefore, adds, "Ye have not received the Spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of Adoption whereby ye cry Abba, Father."

This Spirit is no other than the Spirit of CHRIST, through which we participate of his Filiation; "And this Spirit beareth witness with our Spirit, that we are the children of God." (Rom. viii. 16.) When the soul yields herself to the influence and motions of this Blessed Spirit, she feels the testimony of her Divine Filiation; and she feels also, with super-added joy, that she hath received not the Spirit of bondage, but of Liberty, even, "the Liberty of the children of God." She then finds that she acteth freely and sweetly, though with vigour and infallibility.

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The Spirit of Divine action is so necessary in all things, that St. Paul, in the same passage, foundeth that necessity on our ignorance with respect to what we pray for: "The Spirit, saith he, "also helpeth our infirmities; "for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; "but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with "groanings which cannot be uttered." This is positive: if we know not what we stand in need of, nor pray as we ought to do, for those things which are necessary; and if the Spirit which is in us, and to which we resign ourselves, asks and intercedes for us; should we not give unlimited freedom to its action, to its ineffable groanings in our behalf? This Spirit is the Spirit of the Word, which is always heard, as he saith himself: "I know that thou hearest me always;" (John xi. 42.) and if we freely admit this Spirit to pray and intercede for us, we also shall be always heard. The reason of this is given us by the same Apostle, that skilful mystic, and master of the Internal life, where he adds, "He "that searcheth the heart, knoweth what is the mind "of the Spirit; because he maketh intercession for the "saints, according to the will of God: (Rom. viii. 27.) That is to say, the spirit demandeth only that which is conformable to the will of God; and the will of God is that we should be saved; that we should become perfect: he therefore, intercedeth for that which is necessary for so great an end.

Why should we then burthen ourselves with superfluous cares, and fatigue and weary ourselves in the multiplicity of our ways, "Let us rest in peace?" God himself inviteth us to cast our cares, our anxieties, upon him; and he complains in Isaiah, with ineffable goodness, that the soul had expended its powers and its treasures on a thousand external objects, and mistook its path to happiness, which was attainable by means much more facile: "Wherefore," saith God, "do you "spend money for that which is not bread? and your "labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and "let your soul delight itself in fatness," (Isa. lv. 2.)

Did we but know the blessedness of thus hearkening unto God, and how greatly the soul is strengthened and invigorated thereby, "All flesh would surely be silent

"before the LORD;" (Zech. ii. 13.) all would cease and be still, as soon as he appeareth. But to engage us farther in a boundless resignation, GOD assures us, by the same Prophet, that we should fear nothing in this abandonment, because he takes a care of us, surpassing the highest tenderness of which we can form an idea: "Can a woman," saith he, "forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, she may forget; yet will not I forget thee." (Isa. xlix. 15.) O blessed assurance, pregnant with consolation! Who after this, shall be fearful of resigning themselves wholly to the dispensations and guidance of their God?

CHAP. XXII.

OF INTERNAL ACTS.

ACTS are distinguished into External and Internal.

External acts are those, which bear relation to some sensible object, and are either morally good or evil, merely according to the nature of the principle from which they proceed. I intend here to speak only of Internal acts, those energies of the soul, by which she turns internally to some object, and averts from others.

If during my application to GOD, I should form a will to change the nature of my act, I thereby withdraw myself from GOD and turn to created objects, and that in a greater or less degree according to the strength of the act: and if, when I am turned towards the creature, I would return to GOD, I must necessarily form an act for that purpose; and the more perfect this act is, the more complete is the conversion. Till conversion is perfected many re-iterated acts are necessary; for it is generally progressive, though with some it is almost instantaneous. My act, however, should consist in a continual turning unto GOD, an exertion of every faculty and power of the soul purely for him, agreeably to the instructions of the son of Sirach: "Re-unite all the motions of thy heart in the holiness of GOD (vulgate) and to the example of David, "I will keep my whole strength for thee," (Psal. lviii. 10. vulg.) which is done by earnestly re-entering into one's self; as Isaiah saith,

saith, "Return to your heart," (Isa. xlv. 8. vulg.) for we have strayed from our heart by sin, and it is our heart only that God requires: "my son give me thine heart, and let thine eye observe my ways." (Prov. xxiii. 26.) To give the heart to God, is to have the whole internal energy of the soul ever centring in him, that we may be rendered conformable to his will. We must, therefore, continue invariably turned to God, from our very first application to him.

But the soul being weak and unstable, and accustomed to turn to external objects, she is consequently prone to dissipation. This evil, however, will be counteracted if, on perceiving her aberration, she, by a pure act of return to God, instantly replaces herself in him; and this act subsists as long as the conversion lasteth, by the powerful influence of a simple and unfeigned return to God, and as many reiterated acts form a habit, the soul contracts the habit of conversion; and that act which was before interrupted and distinct becomes continual.

The soul should not then be perplexed about forming an act which already subsists, and which, indeed, it cannot attempt to form without difficulty and constraint: she even finds that she is withdrawn from her proper state, under pretence of seeking that which is in reality acquired, seeing the habit is already formed, and she is confirmed in habitual conversion and habitual love. It is seeking one act by the help of many, instead of continuing attached to God by one simple act alone.

We may remark, that at times, we form with facility many distinct yet simple acts; which shows that we have wandered, and that we re-enter our heart after having strayed from it: yet when we have re-entered, we should remain there in peace. We err, therefore, in supposing that we do not form acts; we form them continually: but they should be in their nature conformable to the degree of our spiritual advancement.

The greatest difficulty with most spiritual people arises from their not clearly comprehending this matter. Now some acts are transient and distinct, others are continual; and again, some are direct, and others reflex. All cannot form the first, neither are all in a state suited to form the last. The first are adapted to those who have strayed, and who require a distinguishable exertion,

exertion, proportioned to the degree of their deviation, which, if inconsiderable, an act of the most simple kind is sufficient.

By the continued act, I mean that whereby the soul is altogether turned toward God in a direct tendency, which always subsists, and which it doth not renew unless it has been interrupted. The soul being thus turned, is "In The Love," and abides therein; "and he that dwelleth in Love dwelleth in God." (1 John iv. 16.) The soul then, as it were, existeth and reposeth in this habitual act, but free from sloth or torpitude; for still there is an unintermitted act subsisting, which is a sweet sinking into the Deity, whose attraction becomes more and more powerful: and in following this potent attraction, the soul presses farther, and sinks continually deeper into the ocean of Divine Love, maintaining an activity infinitely more powerful, vigorous and effectual, than that which served to accomplish her first return.

Now the soul that is thus profoundly and vigorously active, being wholly given up to God, doth not perceive her activity, because it is direct and not reflex: and this is the cause why some, who do not express themselves properly say, that they do not act at all; but it is a mistake, for they were never more truly or nobly active: they should rather say, that they did not distinguish their acts, than that they did not act. I allow they do not act of themselves; but they are drawn, and they follow the attraction. Love is the weight which sinks them into God, as into an infinite sea, wherein they descend with inconceivable rapidity from one profound depth to another.

It is then an impropriety to say, that we do not form acts: all form acts, but the manner of their formation is not alike in all. The cause of the mistake is this; all who know they should act, are desirous of acting distinguishably and perceptibly; but this cannot be: distinct and sensible acts are for beginners, and acts of a higher nature for those in a more advanced state. To stop in the former, which are weak and of little profit, is to debar one's self of the latter; and again to attempt the latter without having passed through the former, is a no less considerable error.

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All things should then be done in their season : every state has its commencement, its progress and its consummation ; and it is an unhappy error to stop in the beginning. There is even no art but what has its process ; and at first we must labour with diligence and toil, but at last we shall reap the harvest of our industry. When the vessel is in port, the mariners are obliged to exert all their strength, that they may clear her thence, and put to sea ; but at length they turn her with facility as they please. In like manner while the soul remains in sin and creaturely entanglements, very frequent and strenuous endeavours are requisite to effect her freedom ; the cords which withhold her must be loosed ; and then by strong and vigorous efforts she gathers herself inwards, pushing off gradually from her old port ; and, in leaving that at a distance, she proceeds to the interior, the haven to which she wishes to steer.

When the vessel is thus turned, in proportion as she advances on the sea ; she leaves the land behind : and the farther she departs from the old harbour, the less difficulty and labour is requisite in moving her forward ; at length she begins to get sweetly under sail ; and now proceeds so swiftly in her course, that the oar which is become useless is laid aside. How is the Pilot now employed ? He is content with spreading the sails, and holding the rudder. To spread the sails, is to lay one's self before God in the prayer of simple exposition, that we may be acted upon by his Spirit : to hold the rudder, is to restrain our hearts from wandering from the true course, recalling it gently, and guiding it steadily to the dictates of the Blessed Spirit, which gradually gain possession and dominion of the heart, just as the wind by degrees fills the sails and impels the vessel. While the winds are fair, the Pilot and the mariners rest from their labours, and the vessel glides rapidly along without their toil ; and when they thus repose, and leave the vessel to the wind, they make more way in one hour, than they had done in a length of time by all their former efforts : were they even now to attempt using the oar, they would not only fatigue themselves, but retard the vessel by their ill-timed labours.

This is the manner of acting we should pursue interiorly ; it will, indeed, advance us in a very short time, by the Divine impulsion, infinitely farther than a whole life

life spent in reiterated acts of self-exertion ; and who-soever will take this path will find it easier than any other.

If the wind be contrary and blows a storm, we must cast anchor to withhold the vessel : our anchor is a firm confidence and hope in God, waiting patiently the calming of the tempest and the return of a more favourable gale, as David “ Waited patiently for the LORD, “ and he inclined unto him, and heard his cry.” (Psal. xl. 1.) We must, therefore, be resigned to the Spirit of God, giving up ourselves wholly to his divine guidance.

C H A P. XXIII.

AN ADMONITION TO PASTORS AND TEACHERS.

IF all who laboured for the conversion of others, were to introduce them immediately into Prayer and the Interior Life, and make it their main design to gain and win over the heart, numberless as well as permanent conversions would certainly ensue. On the contrary, few and transient fruits must attend that labour which is confined to outward matters ; such as burdening the disciple with a thousand precepts for external exercises, instead of leaving the soul to CHRIST by the occupation of the heart in him.

If ministers were solicitous thus to instruct their parishioners, shepherds, while they watched their flocks, might have the Spirit of the primitive Christians, and the husbandman at the plough maintain a blessed intercourse with his God ; the manufacturer, while he exhausts his outward man with labour, would be renewed in internal strength : and every species of vice would shortly disappear, and every parishioner become a true follower of the Good Shepherd.

O when once the heart is gained, how easily is all moral evil corrected ! it is, therefore, that God, above all things requires the heart. It is the conquest of the heart alone, that can extirpate those dreadful vices which are so predominant amongst the peasantry, such as drunkenness, blasphemy, lewdness, envy and theft. JESUS CHRIST would become the universal and peaceful sovereign, and the face of the church would be wholly renewed.

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The decay of internal piety is unquestionably the source of the various errors that have arisen in the church; all which would speedily be sapped and overthrown, ~~was~~ ^{and} inward religion to be re-established. Errors are only so far prejudicial to the soul, as they tend to weaken faith, and deter from prayer; and if, instead of engaging our wandering brethren in vain disputes, we could but teach them simply to believe, and diligently to pray, we should lead them sweetly unto God.

O how inexpressibly great is the loss sustained by mankind from the neglect of the interior? And how tremendous must the great day of retribution be to those who are entrusted with the care of souls, for not having discovered and dispensed to their flock this hidden manna.

Some excuse themselves by saying, that this is a dangerous way; pleading the incapacity of simple persons to comprehend spiritual matters. But the Oracles of Truth affirm the contrary: "The Lord loveth those who walk simply." (Prov. xii. 22. vulg.) And where can be the danger of walking in "the only true way," which is JESUS CHRIST? of giving up ourselves to him, fixing our eye continually on him, placing all our confidence in his grace, and tending with all the strength of our soul to his pure Love?

The simple ones, so far from being incapable of this perfection, are by their docility, innocency, and humility, peculiarly adapted and qualified for its attainment; and as they are not accustomed to reasoning, they are less employed in speculations, less tenacious of their own opinions. Even from their want of learning, they submit more freely to the teachings of the Divine Spirit; whereas others, who are blinded by self sufficiency and enslaved by prejudice, give great resistance to the operations of Grace.

We are told in Scripture, "that unto the simple, God giveth the understanding of his law;" (Psal. cxviii. 130. vulgate.) and we are also assured, that God loveth to communicate with them: "The Lord careth for the Simple; I was reduced to extremity and he saved me." (Psal. cxiv. 6. vulgate.) To warn Spiritual Fathers against preventing the little ones from coming to CHRIST, he himself said to his Apostles, "Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is
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"the kingdom of Heaven." (Matt. xix. 14.) It was the endeavour of the Apostles to prevent children from going to our LORD, which occasioned this gracious charge. Man frequently applies a remedy to the outward body, whilst the disease lies at the heart.

The cause of our being so unsuccessful in reforming mankind, especially those of the lower class, is our beginning with external matters; all our labours in this field, do but produce such fruit as endures not: but if the key of the interior be first given, the exterior would be naturally and easily reformed. To teach man to seek God in his heart, to think of him, to return to him whenever he finds he has wandered from him, and to do and to suffer all things with a single eye to please him, is the natural and ready process; it is leading the soul to the very source of Grace, wherein is to be found all that is necessary for sanctification.

I, therefore, conjure you all, O ye who have the care of souls, to put them at once into this way, which is JESUS CHRIST; nay, it is he himself that conjures you, by the precious blood he hath shed for those entrusted to you, "to speak to the heart of Jerusalem." (Isa. xl. 2. vulgate.) O ye Dispensers of his Graces, ye Preachers of his Word, ye Ministers of his Sacraments, establish his kingdom!—and that it may indeed be established, make him Ruler over the hearts of his subjects! for as it is the heart alone that can oppose his Sovereignty, it is by the subjection of the heart that his sovereignty is most highly exalted: "Give glory to the holiness of God, and he shall become your sanctification." (Isa. viii. 13. vulgate.) Compose catechisms particularly to teach prayer, ~~not~~ by reasoning nor by method, for the simple are incapable thereof; ~~but~~ to teach the prayer of the heart, not of the understanding; the prayer of God's Spirit, not of man's invention.

Alas! by wanting them to pray in elaborate forms, and to be curiously critical therein, you create their chief obstacles. The children have been led astray from the best of Fathers, by your endeavouring to teach them too refined, too polished a language. Go then, ye poor children, to your heavenly Father, speak to him in your natural language; and though it be ever so rude and barbarous in the opinion of men, it is not so to him.

A Father

A Father is much better pleased with an address which love and respect in the child throws into disorder, because he knows it proceeds from the heart, than by a formal and barren harangue, though ever so elaborate in the composition. The simple and undisguised emotions of filial love are infinitely more expressive than all language, and all reasoning.

By forming instructions how to love by rule and method The ESSENTIAL LOVE, men have in a great measure estranged themselves from him. O how unnecessary is it to teach an art of loving! The language of Love, though natural to the lover, is nonsense and barbarism to him that loveth not. The best way to learn the love of GOD, is to LOVE HIM. The ignorant and simple, because they proceed with more cordiality and simplicity, often become most perfect therein. The Spirit of God needs none of our arrangements and methods; when it pleaseth him, he turns shepherds into Prophets: and, so far from excluding any from the Temple of Prayer, he throws wide the gates, that all may enter; while Wisdom cries aloud in the highways, "Whoso is simple let him turn in hither;" (Prov. ix. 4.) and to the Fools she saith, "Come eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled." (Prov. ix. 5.) And doth not JESUS CHRIST himself thank his Father, for having "hid the secrets of his kingdom from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto Babes?" (Matt. xi. 25.)

CHAP. XXIV.

OF THE MOST CERTAIN METHOD TO ATTAIN DIVINE UNION.

IT is impossible to attain Divine Union, solely by the activity of meditation, or by the meltings of the affections, or even by highest degree of luminous and distinctly-comprehended prayer. There are many reasons for this, the chief of which are as follow:

First, According to Scripture "no man shall see God and live." (Exod. xxxiii. 20.) Now all the exercises of discursive prayer, and even of active contemplation, while esteemed as the summit and end of the passive, and not merely as a preparative to it, are still

“living exercises, by which we cannot see God;” that is to say, be united with him: for all that is of man’s own power or exertion, must first die, be it ever so noble, ever so exalted.

St. John relates, “That there was a great silence in heaven.” (Rev. viii. 1.) Now heaven represents the fund and centre of the soul, wherein, ere the Majesty of God appears all must be hushed to silence. All the efforts, nay, the very existence of Self, or Propriety, must be destroyed; because nothing is opposite to God, but propriety; and all the malignity of man is in this propriety, as in the power of its evil nature; insomuch, that the purity of a soul encreases, in proportion as it loses this self-hood; till at length, that which had been a fault, while the soul lived in propriety, and acted from Self, becomes no longer such, from the purity and innocence that she hath acquired, by departing from that propriety, or self-hood, which caused the dissimilitude between her and God.

Secondly, To unite two things so opposite, as the impurity of the creature and the purity of God, the simplicity of God and the multiplicity of man, much more is requisite than the impotent efforts of the creature: no less than a singular and efficacious operation of the Almighty can ever accomplish this; for things must be reduced to some similarity, before they can blend and become one. Can the impurity of dross be united with the purity of gold? What then does God do? He sends his own Wisdom before him, as the last fire shall be sent upon the earth, to destroy by its activity all that is impure therein; and as nothing can resist the power of that fire, in like manner this Wisdom dissolves and destroys all the impurities of the creature, and disposes it for Divine Union.

This impurity so opposite to Union, consists in PROPRIETY and ACTIVITY.

Propriety, or Self, is the source and fountain of all that defilement and corruption, which can never be allied to Essential Purity; the rays of the sun may glance, indeed, upon filth and mire, but can never be united with them. Activity obstructs Union; for God being an Infinite Stillness, the soul, in order to be united to him, must participate of his stillness, else the contrary

riety between stillness and activity would prevent assimilation.

Therefore, the soul can never arrive to Divine Union but by the repose or stillness of her will; nor can she ever become One with God, but by being re-established in the purity of her first creation, that is, in this central repose. God purifies the soul by his Wisdom, as refiners do metals in the furnace. Gold cannot be purified but by fire, which gradually separates from it and consumes all that is earthly and heterogeneous; it must be melted and dissolved, and all impure mixtures taken away, by casting it again and again into the furnace: thus it is refined from all internal corruption, and even exalted to a state incapable of farther purification. The Goldsmith now no longer discovers any adulterate mixture; its purity is perfect, its simplicity complete. The fire no longer touches it; and were it to remain an age in the furnace, its purity would not be increased, nor its substance diminished. Then it is fit for the most exquisite workmanship; and if, thereafter, this gold seems obscured or defiled, it is no more than accidental defilement, contracted by its contiguity to some impure body; but this is only superficial, and widely different from its former impurity, which was hidden in the very centre and ground of its nature, and as it were identified with it. Those, however, who are ignorant of this process, and its blessed effects, would be apt to despise, and reject the vessel of pure gold, sullied by some external pollution; and prefer an impure and gross metal, that appeared superficially bright and polished. Farther, the Goldsmith never mingles together the pure and the impure gold, lest the dross of the one should corrupt the other: before they can be united they must be equally refined: he, therefore, plunges the impure metal into the furnace, till all its dross is purged away, and it becomes fully prepared for incorporation and union with the pure gold.

This is what St. Paul means, when he declares, that "the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." (Cor. iii. 13.) he adds, "If any man's work be burnt, he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire." (15. verse.) He here intimates, that there are a species of works so degraded by impure mixtures, that though the mercy of God accepts them, yet they

they must pass through the fire, to be purged from the contamination of Propriety and Self; and it is in this sense, that God is said "to examine and judge our righteousness," (Psal. xiv. 3. vulg.) because that "by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified; but by the righteousness of God, which is by Faith in JESUS CHRIST. (Rom. iii. 20, &c.)

Thus we may see that the Divine Justice and Wisdom, as an unremitting fire, must devour and destroy all that is earthly, sensual and carnal, and all Self-activity, before the soul can be fitted for and capable of Union with God. Now, this purification can never be accomplished by the industry of fallen man; on the contrary he submits to it always with reluctance; he is so enamoured of Self-hood, and so averse to its destruction, that did not God act upon him powerfully and with authority he would for ever resist.

It may perhaps, be objected here, that God never robs man of his free will, he can always resist the Divine Operations; and that, I therefore err, in saying God acts thus absolutely, and without the consent of man.

Let me, however, explain myself. By man's giving a passive consent, God, without usurpation, may assume a full power and an intire guidance; for having, in the beginning of his conversion, made an unreserved surrender of himself, to all that God wills of him or by him, he thereby gave an active consent to whatsoever God thereafter might operate or require. But when God begins to burn, destroy, and purify, then the soul, not perceiving the salutary design of these operations, shrinks from them; and, as the gold seems rather to blacken than brighten when first put into the furnace, so she conceives, that her purity is lost, and that her temptations are her sins; insomuch, that if an active and explicit consent were then requisite, the soul could scarcely give it, nay often would withhold it. The utmost she can do is to remain firm in her passive disposition, enduring as well as she is able all these Divine Operations, which she neither can nor will obstruct.

In this manner, therefore, the soul is purified from all her proper, distinct, perceptible and multiplied operations, which constitute the great dissimilitude between her and God: she is rendered, by degrees, conform,

form,* and then uniform; and the passive capacity of the creature is elevated, enobled and enlarged, though in a secret and hidden manner, and therefore called mystical: but, in all these operations, the soul must concur passively. It is true, indeed, that, at the beginning of her purification, her activity is requisite; from which, as the Divine Operations become stronger and stronger, she must gradually cease: yielding herself up to the impulses of the Divine Spirit, till she is wholly absorbed in him. But this is often a difficult and tedious process.

We do not then say, as some have falsely supposed, that there is no need of action in the process of Divine Purification: on the contrary, we affirm it as the gate; at which, however, we would not have those stop, who are to attain ultimate perfection, which is impracticable, except the first helps are laid aside; for however necessary they may have been at the entrance of the road, they become afterwards mere clogs, and greatly detrimental to those who adhere to them, preventing them from ever arriving at the end of their course. This made St. Paul say, "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth to those which are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling in CHRIST JESUS." (Phil. iii. 13.)

Would you not say that he had lost his senses, who having undertaken an important journey, should fix his abode at the first inn, because he had been told that many travellers, who had come that way, had lodged in the house and made it their place of residence? All that we should wish then is, that souls should "press toward the mark," should pursue their journey, and take the shortest and easiest road; not stopping at the first stage, but following the counsel and example of St. Paul, suffer themselves to be guided and governed by the Spirit of Grace, which would infallibly conduct them to the end of their creation, the enjoyment of God. But while we confess, that the enjoyment of God is the end for which alone we were created; that, "without holiness," none can attain it, and that to attain it we must necessarily pass through a severe and purifying process; how strange is it, that we should dread

* Conform, by passivity and resignation; and uniform, by "no longer living herself, but by CHRIST living, moving, and acting in her." (Gal. ii. 20.)

more feign this, than the wretch, who is on the point of perishing with hunger, can for a length of time feign to be full and satisfied ; some wish or word, some sigh or sign, will inevitably escape him, and betray his famished state.

Since then none can attain this blessed state, save those whom GOD himself leads and places therein ; we do not pretend to introduce any into it, but only to point out the shortest and safest road that leads to it : beseeching ye not to be retarded in your progress by any external exercises, not to sit down a resident at the first inn, nor to be satisfied with the sweets which are tasted in the milk for babes. If the Water of Eternal Life is shown to some thirsty souls, how inexpressibly cruel would it be, by confining them to a round of external forms, to prevent their approaching it : so that their longing shall never be satisfied, but they shall perish with thirst.

Let us all agree in the way, as we all agree in the end, which is evident and uncontrovertible. The way has its beginning, progress, and end ; and the nearer we approach the end, the farther is the beginning behind us : it is only by proceeding from one, that we can arrive at the other. Would you get from the entrance to the distant end of the road, without passing over the intermediate space ? and surely, if the end is good, holy, and necessary, and the entrance also good, can that be condemnable, as evil, which is the necessary passage, the direct road leading from the one to the other ?

O ye blind and foolish men, who pride yourselves on science, wisdom, wit, and power, how well do you verify what GOD hath said, that " His secrets are hidden " from the great and wise, and revealed unto THE LITTLE ONES,....THE BABES !"

THE
FRENCH EDITOR'S REMARKS
ON THE LIFE OF
LADY GUION.

“ IF to any the state of long-continued proba-
 “ tion she underwent seem strange, it is for
 “ want of duly observing what St. PAUL says of
 “ JESUS CHRIST himself. *For it became him, for*
 “ *whom are all things, and by whom are all things,*
 “ *in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the*
 “ *captain of their salvation perfect through suffer-*
 “ *ings ;* Heb. xi. 10. The same Apostle farther
 “ assures us, that souls which GOD had cho-
 “ sen, ‘ *He also did predestinate to be conformed to*
 “ *the image of his Son.*’ Rom. viii. 9. This pri-
 “ vation, by which she was purified and prepared
 “ for service, ought therefore not to astonish
 “ such readers as have never heard of any thing
 “ like it. It was the same in substance which
 “ was experienced by the great Patriarchs, JOSEPH
 “ and DAVID, and by many other enlightened
 “ souls, the memory of whose sanctity is had in
 “ honour at this day. It is a state consummated
 “ by the *sacrifice of eternal salvation*, or a con-
 “ sent to continue for ever, if GOD pleases so to
 “ direct it, and for his glory, in this same state of
 “ *rigorous privation*, which so many saints have
 “ undergone; and wherein they would rather
 R r r “ chuse

“ chuse, as will be seen here, hell itself than the
 “ least sin: A state which is at last followed
 “ with that of the purest union with GOD, and
 “ according as it pleases him, with gifts and
 “ graces of very high degrees. Here will be seen
 “ examples of several sorts, and of some as sub-
 “ lime as any that are to be met with any where.
 “ As there are in it many things which pass the
 “ natural comprehension of the human mind, it
 “ will be well, in reading them, to remember
 “ that saying of St. PAUL, ‘ The things of GOD
 “ knoweth no man, but the spirit of GOD.’ *And*
 “ *again*, ‘ He that is spiritual judgeth all things,
 “ yet he himself is judged of no man.’ 1 Cor.
 “ ii. 11, 15.

“ This advice of the Apostle ought to make
 “ us very cautious of condemning the ingenuity,
 “ with which this purified soul has described,
 “ without disguise, a part of the persecutions
 “ which have been stirred up against her by all
 “ sorts of persons. It will be seen in the course
 “ of this history, and especially toward the end
 “ of it, that GOD permitted her to pass over in
 “ silence the most considerable part, which re-
 “ gards her last persecutions and her imprison-
 “ ment.

“ As to what appertains to her first proba-
 “ tions in her family, of which she lays open the
 “ particulars, not very favourable to the per-
 “ sons she speaks of, she has made use of so many
 “ precautions, to prevent any one’s passing a
 “ judgment to their disadvantage, that assuredly
 “ none of those any way interested can have any
 “ reason of discontent, from such instances of
 “ mortification and patience here given, as may
 “ serve to the edification of souls and to the glo-
 “ ry

“ ry of God. Here is not any such action
“ exposed as to fix a blemish on them, such as
“ God has permitted the sacred writers to fix
“ on the families of Jacob, David, and several
“ other saints who were honoured not the less
“ on that account. 'Tis only certain domestic
“ vexations which he permitted; and she has
“ sufficiently made the apology for the domestic
“ persons by whom she has been exercised. She
“ has declared, over and over, that they had at
“ heart the fear of God, a sincere piety, and a
“ good share of virtue and of charity; that their
“ manner of acting toward her was a dispensa-
“ tion of God to purify her, to which end he
“ shut their eyes, that they might fall into the
“ mistakes necessary to produce the effect he
“ designed by it; and that, after that use had
“ been made of it, all returned from their pre-
“ judices, humbled themselves before her, ac-
“ knowledged the solidity of her virtue, and even
“ became her panegyrists;

“ A reader of any discernment ought not, in
“ these occurrences, to dwell on the thoughts of
“ the person who commits the faults, and look
“ on himself as above such weaknesses. He
“ ought rather to fear, if God placed him in such
“ probations, and left him to himself, that he
“ would do a hundred times worse, and perhaps
“ never recover from it. It is only for the per-
“ son who receives such treatments, to look at
“ them with meekness, silence, patience, suppres-
“ sion of the movements of nature, benignity,
“ beneficence to every neighbour, thanksgiving
“ to God, in order to be edified and built up
“ thereby; and to pray to God for grace to en-
“ able him to imitate CHRIST in the like trials,

“ so never had an ill day : Nor have I ever been
 “ unhappy, since I have learned always to resign
 “ myself to his will, being very certain of this,
 “ that all his works are perfectly good : And
 “ therefore I never desire any thing else but the
 “ good pleasure of God.” Then said the Doc-
 sor, “ But what if the good pleasure of God
 “ should be to cast you hence into hell ?” “ If he
 “ would do so,” replied the other, “ I have two
 “ arms to embrace him with ; the one whereof is
 “ profound humility, by which I am united to his
 “ holy humanity ; the other is love or charity,
 “ which joins me to his divinity. Embraced with
 “ these two arms he would descend with me thi-
 “ ther, if thither he ordered me : And there I had
 “ infinitely rather be with him, than in paradise
 “ without him.” Hereby the doctor learned that
 a true resignation to the divine will, accompa-
 nied with profound humility of heart, is the short-
 est way to attain God’s love.

After that, he asked him again from whence
 he came. The poor man answered God *sent him*.
 The doctor enquired of him *where he found God*.
 He replied, “ I found him when I had renounced
 “ all the creatures.” “ And where did you leave
 “ him ?” said the Doctor. He replied, “ With
 “ the poor in spirit, the pure in heart, and men
 “ of charity. “ But who are you ?” says the di-
 “ vine. “ I am a king,” says the Beggar. “ Where
 “ is your kingdom ?” says the former. “ In my
 “ soul,” says the latter : “ I have learned to bring
 “ into subjection, and to govern my senses, as
 “ well outward as inward, with my affections and
 “ passions, which kingdom is undoubtedly su-
 “ perior to all the kingdoms of this world.” The
 doctor then asked him by what means he had
 attained to such perfection. He answered, “ By
 “ silence,

“ silence, vigilance, meditation, prayer, and the
“ union I had with God. I could find no sure
“ repose or comfort, in any creature of the world;
“ by means whereof I found out my God, who
“ will comfort me world without end”....*Amen.*

THE END.

